THE QUEST OF THE FACE

STEPHEN GRAHAM

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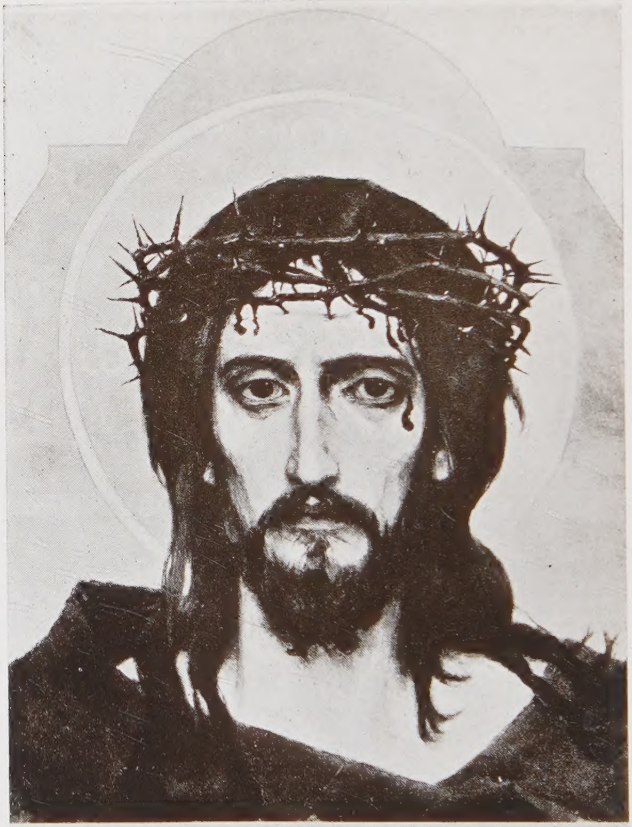

ТОЙ РАЗВЕНЪ БЫСТЬ ЗАГРѢХИ НАША И МУЧЕНЪ БЫСТЬ ЗА БЕЗЗАКОНІѢ НАША
НАКАЗАНІЕ МІРА НАШЕГѠ НА НЕМЪ РАЗВОЮ ЕГѠ МЫ ИСЦѢЛѢХОМЪ (ИС. 53. 5.)

Vasnetsof.

" He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

THE QUEST OF THE FACE

BY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

AUTHOR OF "PRIEST OF THE IDEAL," "THE WAY OF MARTHA AND THE WAY OF MARY," ETC.

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To the Most Heavenly and Beautiful
of Women.

PREFATORY NOTE

"The Quest of the Face" was my last writing before entering the Army. The supplementary studies belong to varying times and places in my life and wanderings. The illustrations are mostly from Russian sources, and I hope that the suggestion of their power and beauty may remind some that though Russia seems to have fallen there is an imperishable Russia which cannot fall.

"The Quest of the Face" was written with much earnestness and joyful expectation, and it is in part a record of actual life and seeking in the streets and among friends. To the many into whose hands the book will come I hope it may be an invitation to become builders of the City in which Dushan and I have been active spiritual masons.

Stephen Graham.

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THE FACE OF CHRIST

We are all seeking a face. It may be the dream face of the ideal, our own face as it ought to be, as we could wish it to be, or the face that we could love, or a face we once caught a glimpse of and then lost in the crowds and the cares. We seek a face of such celestial loveliness that it would be possible to fall down before it in the devotion of utter sacrifice. Some seek it desperately, others seek it ever hopefully, some forget and remember and then forget again and remember again. Others live their life in the consciousness of a promise that they shall see the face at some definite time by and by. The vision of it seems completely remote from some, and they live their life hardly and darkly, but there are others who are perpetually in the light of it, and they see all the common sights of the world transfigured by it.

Each has his separate vision of the face. And as there is an infinite number and diversity of mankind, so the faces of the ideal are infinitely numerous and diverse. Yet as in truth we are all one, so all these faces are one, and all the loveliness is one loveliness.

THE QUEST OF THE FACE

I

THE FACE OF CHRIST

I SET out to look afresh at men's faces. My first impression is that all faces are paler than they were. Men are wearing tattered grave-clothes. Lazy faces, tired faces, worried faces, busy faces, self-satisfied faces, fat faces that droop, lean faces that peer, easy-going faces, hating faces—mostly hurrying, restless, accidental, tide-swept, tide-moved. On the sunny side of the great highway they are thronging; at a street corner they are wedged in a crowd looking up at the sky, in which it seems a balloon is floating. On the cold and shady side of the street they are sparse and anxious. I do not pass over but enjoy the Spring sunshine with the sunlit throng. They pass and they pass and are the same though diverse.

Everywhere I discern the faces of the broken

and the suffering, the faces of those needing healing, needing to be made at one: nowhere do I see the face of a healer who could make whole. I see sometimes the faces of seekers, but I wait and do not find the face of a revealer.

A blind man with red sunburnt face stares upward from empty eye-sockets, looks full-face at the sun and sees nought, though wet tears ooze from where his eyes should be. A tin can hangs from his neck, and across his wretched breast is written: *Pity the poor blind!* A lady, moved by the sight of him, comes forward and drops a penny into his tin can; it falls with a clank, and the blind man, still staring upward, thanks her with an unearthly voice. She passes on forgetfully and uses her eyes to find Spring likenesses of colour in the adorned shop-windows.

Suddenly in the approaching tide two new faces appear and on them a look of expectancy, a knowledge of coming pleasure. And I wonder what is the reason. But they enter a public-house. Anon the door opens again and they come out with a look of indulgence-satisfied and a dull curtain of disillusion.

I walk westward where the shops are larger and the women are multiplied. Women's faces turn, glance, peer; refined faces, shallow faces, worldly faces, vulgar faces, purse-conscious, dress-conscious; shop-reflections, husband-reflections, neighbour-reflections. They stare till they see themselves in the shop windows, picture themselves suddenly in other hats, other blouses, other habits, and still it is not *so*, they are not satisfied. No woman comes carrying a child in her arms.

In shops like marble halls or palace apartments the women see themselves as they would like to be, see or search for their alter-egos in wax. Some wax egos say, "Don't I look nice?" Others say, "How do you like me in this blouse?" Others haughtily, "Am I not perfect?"—the paradise of dames. A foolish paradise, the women flutter past. The first blue-bottle buzzes against the bright panes.

The pavement becomes crowded again and it is difficult to pass. It is in front of a picture shop. There are more men than women staring into the window, and there they see many studies of Eve in the glamour of her nakedness. They stare

hungrily and restlessly. Their faces are hard, masked, curious; preoccupied faces, cruel faces, lascivious faces, comic faces, the faces of buffoons. In the midst of the window there is a face they see accidentally but do not mark, the miraculous portrait; above it is written in red ink,

JESUS CHRISTUS
2/6

and underneath is printed: *"If you watch the eyes, which are shut, you will see them suddenly open."* If you look upon Christ He will look upon you. But the sons of Adam are looking at the daughters of Eve.

They do not look on the miraculous face and therefore it does not look upon them, the Christ remains blind. But if perchance one man looks, one man sees—then he gives eyes to the blind, the blind Christ, blind till then, and He opens His eyes and looks upon him.

A haunting face, unusual, unnatural. I shall not find that likeness as I stray through the crowds of men, nothing like unto it. And yet everywhere and in every face there is something which is re-

lated to it. As the faces pass by me in review I cannot help asking whose face shall I take for my new mystery play, which face of all those thousands has the most fittingness to be chosen for Christ. They have been wont to dress up any man for the part, to give him the conventional beard and chestnut hair, and put the words into his mouth. But mine when I find him will have more responsibility, for I need him not only to be the part but also to prompt me, the artist, as to just exactly who Christ is. So they go past me, these fractions of humanity, each all too small, each one lacking, lacking so much. I love them all, and it is a little sad to reflect that they take no pains, that each one would probably straighten himself and look a little better if he knew he were being looked at as a candidate and being seriously considered as an approximation to the face of Christ. But then at once he would cease to be authentic, his naturalness would disappear and he would begin to act, and I need no one to act the part to me, I could act it very well to myself. When I see the true face it will speak to my heart; the faces that I see so far tell me naught except the sadness, the lone-

liness, the emptiness, the mistakenness of every-day human life. Pass then, pass, pass on, pass by! On thee, on thee, on thee, brother, perchance I shall never look again. On thee, sister, my eyes have rested, and belike I shall never look on you more.

Once more a crowd! This time outside a phrenologist's window, in which is exhibited a plaster cast of a perfect cranium, and beside it scrolls which record phrenological valuations of the heads of Cabinet Ministers and Generals. Soldiers go in and out at the door of the shop, enter nervously and exit happily. The phrenologist marks you for each of the human qualities on a normal of five. If you exceed five marks you are in excess and need to exercise restraint, if less than five you are lacking and should cultivate. Thus each man is tabulated for faith, hope, and charity, fear, combativeness, honesty, imagination, sense of time and place, humour and sublimity.

"Do you ever get a perfect man with five for everything?" I ask.

"No, never, nor do we ever get two exactly the same," the phrenologist replies.

I sit in the room whilst various soldiers with ex-

pressions of doubt, obstinacy, self-consciousness, vanity, and the like come in to have their qualities and defects stated. Some have combativeness in excess, some despite their khaki are pronounced low-spirited, some are too hopeful, others lacking in hope; none seems to have a faith that will remove mountains, but most have an excessive sense of the humorous. No fives are given, but many sevens and threes.

"Thousands of heads pass through my hands," I hear the expert saying. "But no perfect head ever turns up. I never hand out a complete series of fives. But if you take the charts of twenty or thirty ordinary human beings and add them up you'll find the average works out at about five."

"So humanity on the whole is perfect!"

I take out from my pocket a portrait of Christ which has no halo and offer it for examination.

"A strong face, but most unbalanced," comes the phrenologist's reply. "Too slight a hold on life, charity too extreme, likely to be deceived by others. Sense of time and place good, but dangerous lack of combativeness. 9, 9, 2, 11, 8—"

"And the cranium in the window is perfect?"

I ask. "Strange that it should remind me so of a bust of Julius Caesar."

I pass out on to the great highway and thoroughfare once more, murmuring the thought that humanity in the mass is perfect, though individually it is lacking. The Christ, however, is unbalanced. It is the type of Caesar that has the perfect brow.

In a restaurant all are eating or expecting food, or talking as they eat, a new world of faces, all abnormal, but less tired, less pallid, less interesting. No seeking on any face. A tall priest comes in, and before breaking bread solemnly makes the sign of the Cross. That is good, but he sits down to his food and straightway forgets the solemnity. At a large table a dozen or more are sitting and a large fish is served and a whole loaf is cut up, and the one fish and the one bread goes to make flesh in each of the twelve—the unity underlying our partaking of bread together.

I am not of their party, but eat my lonely bread at a table in a far corner, and having eaten, give thanks, leaving no crumbs, and I stray once more into the city, on which night is coming down. I am soon in the midst of a crowd, and it is my lot

to walk against the tide, peering into faces, hoping and expecting. But in the lights of evening the faces are more abnormal, less natural.

The streets have become darker, and human eyes have become brighter. The day of toil is over, and an expectation of happiness throbs in the air. Eyes turn from the darkness to the light, to the screened brilliancy of the windows of jewellers' shops and of costumiers' and the light of so-called palaces and halls. A more mysterious humanity is flocking together, and I go in with it at a door and find myself in a large and crowded theatre. The lights are down, and only the stage, where a beautiful girl is dancing, is lit. I see hundreds of pale featureless faces turned toward the beautiful girl, faces like leaves, sad, silent, pallid faces, hundreds of them, thousands as I surmise. And the beautiful dark girl in pink tights dances before them, makes them pleasure. She enchants them and promises happiness. Every slightest movement is watched, saved, preserved in leaves of memory like delicate rose-petals. She is taken to pieces like a beautiful rose, and kept. She becomes the possession of all, as if many hundreds

of men and women merged into one could have collectively one bride. And all accept in silence, as if each man in his stall were dead in his grave and powerlessly yearned toward life. Only one thing is clear, she has celestial power, she *could* make them live; at one expressed wish all would begin to stir, to whisper, to stretch out hands. And presently it is so—she ceases to dance, goes out from the lighted stage, comes back re-clothed, and coming forward to the centre holds up one hand and commences to sing.

The spell of the dance continues, but with her song it slowly gives way to another spell, as from all parts of the theatre one hears a humming. She is comforting, soothing, promising, crooning, whispering through smiles and tears. She lays a gentle hand on each man's heart, she comes nearer and closer, and reconciles and beguiles, and presently out of all the vast audience from all parts, even from the most remote, voices begin to sing with her, to her. She holds up a delicate finger and all sing to her, to her bright eyes and dark hair and her miniature little figure swathed in light and silk. And I also begin to sing vaguely and move spirit-

ually toward that one centre where the light-beams, streaming through our breath and smoke, converge. An intoxicating golden moment of unity and desire.

Christ somewhere is hidden here. But though there are many faces I cannot see the features, cannot look into each individually. I am not visually aware of my fellow-man. But how strongly I am aware of him in another way, aware of him altogether. If this theatre were empty, if there were no audience but only the girl singing, I should not be moved, and the girl would be less beautiful. She is our unity as it were, our Psyche, dancing and singing before us, not each man's Psyche so much as the Psyche of all as one, of all who are thus moved.

But she goes, and in her place jugglers appear, who quickly cause humanity to forget. And I do not stay, but, the spell being broken, flit outward to the long stone stairs and to the deserted open doorway.

The street of the theatre is now devoid of people. It is as if all had been gathered in to make that great unity of yearning eyes and pallid faces. The lights are screened, and from the back the the-

atre looks like some strange black box with the lid shut down. Yet within is a composite humanity, tier upon tier.

To be by myself is lonely. I am wistful and heart-sick. The song which united me with all those throbbing humans now haunts my mind and plays itself over in my mind as it were with one finger, whereas but lately some marvellous orchestra had rendered it. Yet it was but the gentle voice of a slight girl.

All about me the shutters are down, as if living shops had drawn down vizors over their faces. There is the sense of being in some underground graveyard moving among vaults, and I hasten to find people once more, hasten home, because all seem to be in their homes except those I left in the great painted serrated theatre. Then, nearing home, a last group of peering mortals attracts my gaze to the gloom of a side street. An accident has occurred, and five or six men and women are staring at the ground and asking questions of one another. A stranger on the road has suddenly fallen down, has fainted or is perhaps dead. He lies full length. Some one is trying to lift him;

how heavy he is! Some one has undone his collar and coat, but his pallid reposing face looks upward without animation. Gazing at him I completely lose the impression I had of the theatre. A strange face. The strangest I have seen to-day. As I stare at it questioningly I ask myself why it has not been my lot to see just such a face borne on the shoulders of the living—in the midst of the crowd. Of all faces that I have seen this one is likest to the miraculous portrait, and as I look at his closed eyes attentively it is as if they open quietly and look upon me.

I bend over him to see him more clearly. For the murky light of the darkened lamps causes the white face with its dark beard and hair to look even more like a picture, like an old painting of Rembrandt.

"Do you know him?" a voice asks. "No? You do not recognise him? He has no marks of identification, not even a letter or a tailor's name sewn to his cloak?"

I take from my bosom the portrait of Christ without a halo and offer it to the man addressing me.

"It is not the same," says the latter. "But it has a family likeness. Whose portrait is it? His brother's perhaps."

Perhaps. It was given me when I was a child, but I have never met Him in the flesh. Yet I've always thought I might. A wonderful face. It has lain between the leaves of my Testament for twenty years and has grown pale there. They say He is alive. I long to find Him. He is to be found. But oh that I knew where!

So we stand gazing upon the face of the dead and watch the heavy body laboriously lifted up by bearers. My mind goes back suddenly to the bright Psyche on the stage. How light was that Psyche, how heavy this corpse on the street! We watch the bearers grapple with it and bear it ponderously away to the police station and then to the mortuary to be ranged with other bodies of anonymous humanity.

Though the body was taken away, the symbol and sense of death remained graven in my mind. In my wanderings among men during the day I had become intimate with but one individual and he was dead. True, I had become intimate with

the nameless many, in the hurrying road-throng at noonday, in the theatre at night, strangely and marvellously intimate. But only with the dead man had I as an individual established common ground. And with human perversity I preferred to dream of the latter. I obliterated the larger impressions from my mind. Sadness and gloom filled the space of my loneliness and wrapped me about in the night hours. The thought that people are and then are not was my despair, that people have once been but are not now, are not even remembered but lost.

Toll the bell! Toll the bell for the dead! Pray for the poor dying men and women! Light the candles and weep for the dead, for the living who have entered the great darkness! For the living who are entering it in thousands whilst we think!

Think of those whose bright faces were turned away from us ages ago, of those whom you have forgotten, whom every one in the world has forgotten, whom no one of any coming age shall ere recall. They are lost in the vast outer limbo, which is so much greater than the narrow sphere

of memory. That is our despair, the despair even of a Christ-seeker. We have all to enter it, not only the first twilight of memory but the outer darkness of complete oblivion wherein myriads are lost.

There are nights which the days succeed. They begin with radiant sunset that promises a morrow. Day follows night, day follows night, day follows night, but at last comes a night that no day follows. The twilight is murky and without promise, and night comes on without stars, and lamps are lit and burn low, and are replenished with oil and burn again, and again burn low and flicker, and again are replenished and again burn out, and night goes on. It goes on till all the oil in the world is burnt, and on and on for ever, intense, silent, black, and breathless.

We are lighting lamps for Solomon and Homer and Dante and Shakespeare, but they and all the rest recede. All our dead have entered the darkness, and when we write of them or call their faces back to memory we are lighting the lamps—we light them, succeeding generations light them, but at last a generation comes that has no oil.

I mused in this way as I lay in bed in the oppressive darkness of my room. And the face of the dead man whom I had seen remained pale and sad in my memory and yet vivid as if the moon were shining upon it. The face of one who was destined to oblivion, a face also near to that of Christ.

Next morning my dear professor joined me at breakfast, and ruffling his hair with both hands, exclaimed in a distracted way:

"What a morning, what a morning!"

"Yes, it is a lovely morning," said I.

"Oh, not that I mean, not that I mean," replied the professor with chagrin. "It is Marathon morning, my dear fellow, the anniversary of Marathon, think of it!"

And the sun streamed through the upper panes of the windows, lightening his silvery hair and my gaunt haggard cheeks.

"Its memory shall never pass away," said the professor.

We opened the *Times*. Its pages were replete with the casualties of a great battle, a long list of the dead printed in small type.

"But the memory of those who died at Marathon has gone," said I.

"No, no," said the professor. "They are remembered. Each of these names you see here has his home where for generations they will be proud of him. It is glorious, it is moving, my dear fellow, moving—"

"We have not, alas, the Marathon casualty list that we might look it over," said I coldly.

"But we have, we have," said the professor, and he flattened out the newspaper before me, and I smiled.

A strange thought suffused my mind, and I suppose it came from the professor's faith—even those who died at Marathon are alive in Christ.

I have no doubt it is true. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. By Christ, in some mysterious way, all who died even before He was born must be saved also. He is the link between the living and the dead, and looking on the dead man's face one is suddenly, as it were, aware of Him. The face of Christ can be descried from the gate of death. Even so. The Eastern mediaeval portrait such as I have seen on

old ikons is a reflection from the face of the dead —brown, wizened, wrinkled and unearthly. That portrait is a saying *Nay* to this life in favour of some other life to which death is nearer.

Pity for the forgotten dead and for those who now seem to lie in dissolution, and also terror, all incline us to raise up the effigy of the dead as Christ. They incline me also.

Nevertheless I fervently believe that Christ is to be found in the faces of the living. Christ walks *perdu* among the flocking crowd, and I might find Him in a human face. His face lurks in the face of some one who has passed me. If the face which is a reflection of death be authentic I should be able to find that face in the human faces which go by. The quest cannot be vain: I can and will find the face that I seek. A dead man could not play in my mystery play, though he might prompt some words of the drama. The word is good, but I must also have the life. I look at men's faces afresh but I do not see death. I see mortality, foreknowledge of death, but not death itself. Sad faces, tired faces, jaded faces, the faces of the dying, of those condemned to death—but all have

in them life. 'Tis true no one seems to be completely and absolutely alive. It would take four or five of these pitiful fractional brother humans of the street to make up one face which should be wholly alive. Perhaps more. But no number would add up to death. It is impossible to see the dead man Christ standing in the background of a man, behind his eyes. And for that reason, though seemingly death is in proximity to Christ, I decide not to accept the guidance of the face of the dead man. Christ is no corpse tied to a living man's back.

There is in men's features something unwonted, something unusual. The most ordinary face as well as the most striking and unusual gives a hint of something or some one other than himself. It is not a likeness to any one I know, but a likeness to some one I have not seen. Perhaps they have to develop the likeness more, or I have to develop the eyes that see more. But I have a feeling that the mystery is a large one. It draws me on, and it is because of it that I feel the face is to be found thus, and though I accept the help of so-called

portraits I do not accept the portraits as a substitute. The Living One is my only authenticity.

The temptation comes to me to seek the likeness in those who seem more alive. In the windows of Paternoster Row I see pictures of the Western Christ, the typical and recognisable portrait of the West. His face in these is far removed from the image of death. There is a fairness in His face. He is the resurrected One, saying as it were, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" He is a gracious living human being with a suggestion in His face and bearing of some mystical white horse. This picture is true for most of us in the West. For the West, being always more eager to be obvious, identifies itself readily with the simple idea of life.

And it is on the side of life that I seek for my type, not knowing, however, what exactly life is or what are its limitations, not even certain whether in life I include death also as a mere incident in living and greater living. Life presents itself first of all as strength. I look carefully at Burgess who swam the Channel, and Zbysco the wrestler, whom none could overthrow, at many sturdy soldiers,

those especially from country places and overseas. Among these, however, is dulness and less inspiration. I then seek strength coupled with boldness and then associated with authority and tempered by mercy and I see the face on which is written, "Enough unto myself." I see confident, decisive, and resolute faces, the faces to which others look reliantly, the faces of those who take life into their own hands and make out of it something worth while. They are in contrast to the pitiful broken faces of average humanity. It is pleasure to look on them. And yet I do not love them so much, am not attracted to them, and feel as if somehow their life must be narrower. The strong man abides by himself. A paradox if in reality the strong man is narrower than the weak, has less possibility of divinity than the weak. A still greater paradox if the Divinity is to be sought in the weak.

I suppose Napoleon and Alexander in their pitch of pride had a suggestion of immortality in their faces. They almost looked immortals, as if a new type had arrived on the earth and would not die, would not decay or wane or tend toward the

grave. Yet even in *their* eyes was the monition: Remember that thou also must die.

Yet they craved immortality, as we all do, and perhaps the strong desire and will were good evidence of capability. They (and we) are capable of being immortal.

With this thought I dream as I walk and ask myself the questions, "What is it to be immortal? What would it be like to be immortal?" Then I see the type. If I partook of the magical elixir I should suddenly straighten myself out, and there would fall from me all manner of signs of weakness, not only from my face but from every part of my body and limbs and from my guise and bearing. I should not step as I do now, timidly and tentatively as if I were not altogether sure where my foot would come to earth, and even if I took small steps there would be something different about them. The sound of the footfall would become metallic. My speech would be changed. It would be forthright—a more absolute *utterance*. No whispers and lispings. The tones of ordinary human sadness would vanish. And the face, wherein the hieroglyphic of man's destiny is writ-

ten, would be different, the old features erased and a new lettering of the eternal Sanscrit inscribed. My brow, broken with lines of mortality, would become like brass or marble, massive as that of the Sphinx. My eyes would become larger, and instead of being liquid and gentle would be hard and glittering like polished stones. Mortality would have gone from these orbs, I should not be lovable any more. But I should be strong. It seems I should be everything which man is not.

Man is the weak, the unfulfilled, the mortal,

> He weaves and is clothed with derision,
> Sows and he shall not reap,
> His life is a watch and a vision
> Between a sleep and a sleep.

For that reason we love one another, yearn toward one another.

Still, as I said, many do crave the absolute nature of strength and are pleased when some one flatters them, saying, "Thou art an immortal." One man says, "I cannot look on a weak man without a certain feeling of repulsion." Perhaps that is because the weak man reminds him silently: You are not so strong as you pretend, you also

must die at last, and have a portion in the grave and with the worms. Nevertheless this solecism of feeling strong, desiring to be strong, taking one's stand as strong, since it does exist, and is part of the natural history of humanity, cannot be thus dismissed.

Where does the truth lie? With the weak or with the strong? That is a great question, and though I theorise and speculate whilst I seek, I cannot accept any answer which I may deduce merely as a deduction. My answer, I know, must come from the living face.

There is a clever picture by the Russian painter Gé that states the question, puts it before my eyes; it is called "What is Truth?" and it might have been called "Where does the Truth lie?" It is a representation of Pontius Pilate and Christ. Pontius Pilate is strong and full of life; he is fat from good living, hard in his self-sufficiency, and he stands in the full light of prosperity. Christ, on the other hand, stands in deepest shadow. He is broken and enigmatical and sorrowing. He is weak, and when Pilate makes his imperious gesture and asks, "What is Truth?" Christ even seems con-

fused and has not wherewith to reply. He is almost abashed. Pontius Pilate is strong and secure: Christ, however, is like a tramp or a broken-down fellow of the streets. He is an exaggeration of the weak. There is perhaps even guilt in His face. For to be ill-dressed and weak smacks a little of guilt in the presence of one who is strong and has authority. It can compromise a case. But where does the Truth lie; with which of these two? We would answer pat, knowing the answer from their respective names, but the average Christian of to-day, not knowing one was Pilate and the other Christ, would be inclined to think the prosperous man had the truth, was more to be relied upon. These fat men, they who sleep o' nights, are much preferred.

However, if they were walking before me, this Pilate and Christ of the picture, I should not find my answer in either of them. I should, however, feel that the weaker face was nearer and that there was more of the ideal in the man who was nearer to death.

Of this picture the most extreme hopes were entertained by Gé and his friend Tolstoy, and they

"WHAT IS TRUTH?"

thought it might change the whole point of view of Europe with regard to the significance of Christ —a whole Russian novel on a canvas. But there is something lacking in it, however. We feel that Christ, pitiful as He is, is not saving the sinful man in His presence, and Pontius Pilate, instead of being in any way redeemed or made lovable, is shown as more odious, thrown into sharp contrast with the unfortunate one. Even the strong man, granted that he be human, seems to be in need of being saved.

Another statement of the question whether human truth is to be sought with the weak or with the strong might be made by the mere presentation of two portraits of absolute types, as for instance by placing Napoleon and Christ in contrast as in Verestchagin's picture.[1] In the East this question is more debated than in the West. Napoleon is shown in Moscow. He has made his bed in the most holy place there, in the Cathedral of the Assumption on Moscow's holy hill. He has chosen it, not because it is holy, but because it is convenient. Napoleon is sitting in the midst of the majesty

[1] "Bad News from France."

of the temple he does not understand. He is strong and mighty and well-clothed, and still prosperous though anxious. He has a suggestion of the look of an immortal, and at the same time lurking in his eyes the conditional destiny latent in the year 1812. He holds in his hands a despatch.

This picture might be called "Where does the Truth lie?" For Napoleon has his back to Christ. The fresco behind him shows the Master. It is marked by bullets and slashed by bayonets. Soldiers have peeled parts away. The portrait of Christ is fading in the emphatic presence of Napoleon. But where does the Truth lie? History has given the answer, as she will no doubt give it again. But lest we should miss it the painter has given us an extra suggestion for guidance. For whilst in Napoleon's hand is urgent news, in Christ's is the open Bible; in Napoleon's hands the telegram, so to speak, in Christ's the Eternal Word. We are reading the Gospel, and a telegram or the latest paper comes. We drop the holy Book and read the news. And then we return to the Gospel again.

Napoleon is history's strongest man. As the

Verestchagin.

BAD NEWS FROM FRANCE.

lion is a king of beasts, so he stands to us as a king of men. And in seeking the strong man as opposed to the weak or in contrast to the weak we seek him. He is the next term of the Darwinian theory. As the ape is to man, so is man to Napoleon. That is how it has been stated. And in any case Napoleon stands as a portent on the road of humanity. He is the pet pattern of man; identity with him is frequently the fixed idea of the lunatic. Many men are preoccupied with ideas concerning him, and the literature about him is in thousands of volumes. In the more vulgar domain of commerce we have Napoleons of finance, Napoleons of the press, but even in the purified air of philosophy we find the noble and unhappy Nietzsche obsessed by the fineness of being a Napoleon. He looks with disgust at the faces of contemporary humanity and reacts violently in favour of the strong man, the man who is not weak. "What is it that just I find intolerable, that which alone I cannot away with," asks he, "which makes me suffocate and pine? Bad air! Bad air! That something ill-constituted comes near me; that I must endure the smell of an abortive soul! . . .

From time to time permit me one glance upon something perfect, something completely finished, something happy, mighty, triumphant, in which there is still something to be feared! Upon a man that justifies *man;* upon a complementary, lucky, and redeeming case of man, vindicating our faith in man! The levelling of European man hides our greatest danger. We see to-day nothing which will grow larger; we divine that all goes still downward . . . to the more Chinese, the more Christian."

And the German philosopher obtains relief from the spectacle of broken and fractional humanity by gazing on his favourite figure, the one who nearer than any other was whole, Napoleon. At the French Revolution, as he says, there appeared "the antique ideal," and against the battle-cry of the right of the most, though not against the love-cry of the right of all, "there resounded the rapturous counter-cry of the privilege of the fewest. Like some last hint pointing to another road appeared Napoleon, the most isolated of men that ever was. . . ."

In such words does the philosopher, out of pa-

tience with humanity, ask you and me to seek the Superman, to look into the faces of passing men for the Napoleon. He constructs on his surmise a philosophy of individualism.

And I ask the question: Is the face I seek the face of the Superman? No? Then is it the face of the under-man?

It seems no face could be His unless there were the possibility that all others could hail and acknowledge it as *the* face. The strong face does not gain much assent. Christ said, "I am the Vine; ye are the branches." But we cannot imagine Napoleon as the Vine and ourselves as the branches. There is a characteristic story which shows what sort of man the people naturally pick out as holy. Ivan the Terrible built a cathedral in Moscow, one of the architectural wonders of Europe, St. Vassily Blazhenny. He was a terrible monarch, a great Russian Caesar. Many a man he sent to the stake, and the square where the cathedral stands is called the Red Square because of the blood which was shed there. The cathedral is not, however, associated to-day with Ivan, but with a poor wretched cripple who sat in the Red Square all the time the

cathedral was a-building, and reviled the monarch. This cripple was called Vassily the Silly or the Blessed (Vassily corresponds to William in our language). The Tsar did not lay hands on the cripple because the people held him to be holy, the Tsar himself may even have felt that he was holy. But the question is again: Where does the Truth lie, with Caesar or with Silly Willy? The word *blazhenny* means both blessed and silly, just as our word silly was once *selig*, and it was possible to speak of the Silly Babe. Silly and Christ-like once had something in common. Be it remembered in passing that the novelist Dostoievsky, endeavouring to show a type in our every-day life approaching to Christ in character, produced the Idiot, Prince Mishkin. If each portrait of Christ be an answer to the question, "Whom do men say that I am?" Dostoievsky answers with the picture of Mishkin the Idiot!

I cannot help contemplating two conceptions: Christ as the fool, and then civilisation as "fool-proof," as a brutal modern phrase expresses the idea. Both are alarming: Christ as fool, and civilisation as fool-proof. But as I walk through the

street I think of Carlyle's shocking phrase, "mostly fools," and it breaks in upon my mind with an unexpected, unintended charm. "Mostly fools"—what if in reality that might mean mostly images of Christ?

But Carlyle did not mean that. He spoke out of his irritation at the common run of humanity, because the average man had not his intellect nor type of spiritual struggle, and could not share his thought or add a word of poetry to his. It was spasmodic misanthropy, and of the same kind as Nietzsche's phrase expressed—"the-much-too-many."

I see a new type come through the crowd. He jostles his neighbour contemptuously, on his face is enmity and impatience. Every man and all are in his way. They hinder him. He spits to one side as he gets free, and shakes himself in his clothes, as it were to get free of an infection. He looks as though he would prefer a desert to any populace. He is the misanthrope. His attitude, though it may be little more than a pathetic human pose, makes for disruption and death. It is a discord and it mars the unity of love. Carlyle, how-

ever, did not hate his fellow-men. Looking at them at a certain moment and in a certain mood he found them somewhat contemptible. The best they could do was to find some hero whom they could humbly obey and then yield up their personal intelligence and follow him. He did not see a potential hero in every fellow-man, the chance man. Nor do I perhaps.

If a man be misanthropic or an egoist he "abideth alone"; he becomes segregated from the crowd. But if he love humanity he sinks himself in the crowd, rejoices to be of the *many*. The emblems of the two types are—Christ on the Cross, and Napoleon on St. Helena; Christ is crucified between two thieves in the midst of humanity, a miserable human on His right and a miserable human on His left; but Napoleon makes his end in segregation from humanity, on the island. He is godlike but less than a god, human yet more than human—the ego intensified and affirmed, whereas Christ is the ego laid down.

I see the fools in the passing crowd. I do not often see a Napoleonic type. Napoleon, however, professed to see in each common soldier the possi-

VASSILY AND IVAN.
(In this composite picture "Holy Willy," as he was called, and Ivan the Terrible are brought in contrast.)

bility of becoming a Napoleon, and it might be another man's quest to seek Napoleons in people's faces. At a parting of the ways I might say to a friend who had accompanied me so far, "You seek Napoleons: I seek Christs."

An important question, however, is: What sort of a place is it in which we are seeking these differing great types? As two friends might agree to part, one seeking tigers, the other lambs—a great deal depends on the place in which they seek. Is man's face a likely place? Is the animal or the God to be found there? Is the animal normal or is the human face of to-day a place where the animal is seen to be outlived? My feeling is that the truly characteristic and new type of face of to-day is one in which love is an insoluble factor.

Rubeck the sculptor, in his misanthropic period, sought as a key to the personality of those who came to him the animal base.[1] In each accidental ordinary face which he saw there was something equivocal, and accordingly the busts which he did of them were equivocal also. On the surface they were "striking likenesses," as people called them,

[1] When we dead awaken.

staring at them in astonishment; but at bottom they were, as he said, "pompous horse faces; self-opinionated donkey-muzzles; lop-eared, low-browed dog-skulls and fatted swine-snouts, or sometimes dull brutal bull-fronts." With less malevolence the sculptor Rubeck might perhaps have found tiger nature also, especially in women, and bird-consciousness, reptilian earth consciousness, and the like. It is true there is something equivocal in men's faces. There has been for a long time. It is possible to find all these animals in the faces of the passing crowd. It is also possible to see gleams of a celestial substance which is not animal. In that sense the faces are equivocal.

And if there are animal faces in the faces of men, it is also true that there are reflections of human beings in animals. Dogs especially reflect their master's personality, and cows the character of their milk-maids. A cock in France is different from a cock in England. The bear upon occasion walks like a man, and the bull-dog has the mannish aspect of John Bull. The horses of the Kirghiz, so legend says, sometimes change into men, and men conversely into horses, so near they are akin.

On Christmas Eve the Serbs carry cakes to the oxen, for they also participated in the birth of Christ and will ultimately be saved. A wolf suckled the founders of Rome itself. But all these manifestations are wonderful, inasmuch as they show the human on the basis of the animal. Mowgli is a marvellous stranger among the animals, and though civilisation is like the scampering of the Bandar log the man-child cannot find his home among the animals but yearns away from the jungle. So men yearn away from the animal in themselves. And because of that also their faces are equivocal. Therein lies the wonder of the ordinary face, and any artist who would be true and do noble work must paint the *looking-away-from* which is in every face. And if besides that he can show also that which he is *looking-onward-to* it will be perfect painting.

The faces in the crowd are to me an enigma. They are all veiled or else my eyes have films. This *looking-away-from* and *looking-onward* is written in each face, even in the most jaded, but I cannot fathom the mystery of it, cannot write the origin and destination it betokens. What is hid-

den thus is not a simple or mechanical mystery such as a riddle, but a Divine one such as of the nature of God. The solution does not come as a precise mathematical result, but the sense is wafted to and fro, comes and goes, now making my soul ache, but anon leaving me with the thought that there is no mystery whatever. One thing is certain—when I am moved by any one face, it gets larger vividly, I see a canvas of humanity, and all manner of faces seem to press into the picture into the one face that I see. And I obtain a vivid sense of humanity as a whole *looking-away-from* and at the same time *looking-onward-to*.

Individual man, however, is the artist. He draws the face of Christ, the ideal likeness, in his own striving, and in the midst of the muddle of his existence. In his features are lines of the portrait. He works in the book of life which the angel keeps, wherein every page is illuminated and emblematical. Each man's life when it has been lived and written in the book may be seen as an individual attempt to paint the portrait of Christ. Forgiveness, so necessary to all, is the erasure of the lines which do not count.

A priest, discussing the merits of an exhibition of portraits of Christ, remarked that each portrait was a personal answer to the question, "Whom do men say that I am?" I take that to be a valuable criterion for art and life. Technique does not seem to have the importance asked for it—we are ourselves many of us ill-fashioned, asking often in the phrase of Omar, "What! did the hand then of the potter shake?" Historical accuracy, historicity as it is called, is vain. But "Whom do ye say that I am?" is a vital and eternal standard. As there seems to be no answer for ever to the Sphinx question, "What is man?" so there seems to be infinite answer all the time to the Christ question, "Who is Christ?"

A collector of portraits has named his collection "The Cloud of Witnesses." I wonder if his thought could be extended with reference to the context of that phrase, "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." [1] Reading that scripture the mind's eye

[1] Hebrews xii.

sees all the faces that ever were created watching us being perfected and finished in Christ, because without *us* they also cannot be perfect. It is also the thought of my dear professor—even those who died at Marathon are waiting our perfection.

Each portrait of Christ is an answer to the question, "Whom do men say that I am?" and therefore the collection of portraits, though possessing a similarity, like the series of family photographs nailed to the cottage wall, have also a multifarious diversity. And the diversity of the portraits is not unlike the diversity of the faces passing on the street.

As we look at the faces now we feel that some are alive, some dead. Those seem most alive which are nearest to our own conception of what the Face should be. But I suppose none, not even the most formal and conventional, is really dead, but like the barren staff is capable of flowering again. We need to see each portrait in its true place—in the time when it was produced and among the people for whom it was painted. If we would know the complete answer which the Italians have given to the Christ question we need to review

all Italian portraits of Christ from the first till now. If we wish to know the answer given by the Spanish or Dutch or Germans or Russians we must think of the cloud of witnesses each nation has afforded. The one picture which we look at is as much part of an infinite series as is the face of the chance passer-by.

In Russia's portraits of Christ a great harmony is discernible. The early pictures need the later ones, and the later pictures need the early ones. Ushakof's portrait of Christ painted in 1661 needs Vasnetsof's painted in 1905 to make it perfect, and Vasnetsof's portrait cannot quite stand by itself. It is arresting; it has modernity written in it. But the very word modernity has an uncharitable afterthought or aftertaste, as if it were unpleasantly forgetful of the past. When we see the two pictures together we have the Christ in whom the dead are raised up equally with the living. Ushakof and Poznansky and myriads of others asleep in the old earth of the centuries await the faces of succeeding generations to complete their portrait, they need Nesterof and Vasnetsof and Gé and the many painters of to-day, they need and we need those who yet

shall come. As clearly as Vasnetsof is seen perfecting and finishing Ushakof, shall they be seen perfecting the face which we show now. And if I look at many faces of different epochs and at the same time dream of faces to be, the conceptions seem to blend and magnify one another, and I visualise spiritually the collective Russian Christ.

And even now that vision is partial, fractional. It needs also the collective French Christ, the collective German Christ, the collective Christ of the small but not less mighty nations, the Christ also of nations not yet born a second time, the Christ of China, India, Japan. As the phrenologist said, "All individuals are lacking; only humanity in the mass is perfect," so I suppose all individual portraits of Christ are lacking also, it needs all humanity to be one in the portrait of Christ before perfection is reached.

The English answer touches us most since we are English, for as a nation we have to prepare our full and complete answer for the day when all the nations of the world will give each in his own language witness to the heavenly King.

Wandering through the crowd I came to-day upon a theologian who explained to me at length that I was wrong. Christ was independent of miserable humanity. He was a God far away in the splendid heavens. True, He had walked here once incognito as a man, and purblind humanity had attempted to destroy Him. But being a God He conquered death and returned to His throne afar. He was no longer here: He was risen. One day would come a reckoning, and those who had lived righteously would be given a reward of bliss, and those who had lived unrighteously would be thrust down into everlasting fire. Christ had no portion now in our miserable life.

But if Christ be not part of us how can we be one with Him? My hand or my child is subject to me because it is flesh of my flesh. And it is in the same way that we are subject to God—because we are part of Him.

I suppose the theologian's conception of Christ was, however, *his* answer to the question, "Whom do ye say that I am?" and made up part of the whole series of answers, loth though I may be to find a common ground with him.

Another answer is that which Holman Hunt gave in his picture "The Shadow of the Cross." Christ is standing in the carpenter's shop, and His shadow as it falls makes a cross. The floor is covered with lovingly-painted curling shavings of wood, and even waste-ends are seen to be beautiful in the presence of Christ. Through the clear window we see the Holy Land, recognise it at once if we have ever been there. No detail in the picture is too small for the loving and creating hand of the painter. That perhaps was the meaning of the character of pre-Raphaelite painting—no small or mean or miserable thing was really mean or negligible, but had a true value and loveliness in the presence of the Master. In many of the pictures of Holman Hunt and Millais and Madox-Brown and Burne-Jones there is an invisible Christ—in the presence of whom everything in the scene has its own particular loveliness. They painted Christ in ordinary life and brought Him from an inaccessible heaven into the life of the every-day. They saw Him there, found His presence there. And that inspired them with a love of all the eyes saw —because such things had been made holy by

Ushakof.

"WHOM DO MEN SAY THAT I AM?"

Christ seeing them—were made holy now by the presence of the invisible Christ.

How differently men have answered:—Carlyle with his history of Cromwell; Dostoievsky with Myshkin; Gorky in the Fellow-traveller; Oscar Wilde in De Profundis; Walt Whitman in *Salut au monde;* Solovyof in his vision of Divine Humanity; Tolstoy in his simplification of the Gospels, in his desire to found a religion of Jesus without miracles; Goethe in his Thought that if Christ had not lived it would now be necessary for some one to become Christ; Kant by his moral imperatives; Nietzsche in his denial of the exclusiveness of the moral. Strange that the artistic Friend of sinners of Wilde's *De Profundis* is the same as He who in the *Brothers Karamazof* kissed the aged Grand Inquisitor on the lips, the same as the Cromwellian Christ, the Happy Warrior of Wordsworth and the Supreme but central and mystical figure of Solovyof!

As strange and as simple as that all mankind, differing so widely and so much more hostilely than these, is in reality a unity, a brotherhood! Our own divinity could only be perfectly met by

a Christ who had diversity in the same degree. Each typical sufferer needs a different vision. When the question is asked: Who is Christ? the *blind* man answers: it is he who gives sight to the blind. The *mute* man: it is he who opens the lips of the dumb. The *cripple:* it is he who makes me whole. The *sick:* it is he who shows me where my health lies. The *condemned:* he who says, "Neither do I condemn thee." The *hard:* it is he who melts and fuses the material shell. *One* answers: it is he who gives hope in the hour of great sorrow. *Another:* it is he who saves me in the moment of temptation. He who needs spiritual leadership claims that he is above all, the Captain of his soul. All these and myriads besides. And yet there are not many almighties but one Almighty.

Every man's ideal is his abstract Christ—his

> All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me.

That ideal is the picture we draw in life. Not all paint with the brush, some paint in the word, but all at least paint with life. Some answer on

canvas, some on the printed page, others in marble; but all in life.

Yet not one of the men and women whom I see wears the ideal face, though, as I suppose, even the dullest possesses it, masks it. They all see naturally gleams of something more beautiful than themselves and yearn toward it. There is one face and then a second face hanging in front of it or behind it. There is always a suggestion of unseen features behind the visible ones, and I am reminded of women I have seen in the East wearing such thin veils over their faces that shadowy features suggesting sometimes an unearthly beauty were seen through them. Such were the faces of the men and women in the crowd, shadowy, with other more beautiful features vaguely showing through.

I take one out of the crowd at random and let him be Christ to me, try him for Christ's part in my mystery play.

He is an ordinary man, vigorous, ambitious, hail-fellow-well-met, fond of a joke and a drink, not mean, not particularly generous, not suspicious; on the other hand, not particularly trustful of a

stranger. He has a wife and children for whom he cares more than for the rest of humanity, and he has two brothers, one of whom he loves, the other he dislikes. He has a business handed on from his father, now retired. In politics he is Liberal; he does not go to church, though his wife goes and prays for him. He reads the newspapers.

In looking on him I have the thought, "I have chosen you," and this fact begets a certain stillness in the breast, a hush, a sense of the marvellous. "In you, my friend, lives the Son of Man." Not that I tell him. Instinct saves me from letting him know my purpose in direct language. I enter into his life, he into mine, and I prepare a manuscript to take down the words of Christ for my play as he shall speak them.

I feel a great tenderness and gentleness towards him. I forgive him and make allowances for all in him that is not Christ, for the animal in him, the earth in him, the parrot in him, the jackdaw in him, the human, all-too-human in him. For whole days this man is a frog; for days he is a worm, he is an ape, an elephant, a small dog. Even in the midst of his ordinariness there shows occasionally some-

thing of the pre-historic,—though there never leaves his eyes the gleam of something beyond this time, the post-historic. The more I know him the more curious do I find his natural history, the way he behaves from day to day. "Cheery old Saunders," his friends say of him, "he's always the same." But he is never the same. In his quiet way he is always trying a new rôle. He imitates in a vague way the King, the Prime Minister, John Bull, the American dancer, his chance acquaintance, the average man; or he strives to look what a good Liberal ought to be, or wears a style of clothes to suggest wealth. I never, however, see him pretending to be Christ, or imitating the Master, and that is somewhat disconcerting to a seeker. On the other hand, I see behind his features certain other ideal features. It is curious that often as he looks at himself in the glass, endeavouring to see that he looks well, or to find resemblance between his features and those of other men, he does not once descry the shadowy but sweet and beautiful countenance lurking behind his.

He knows not Christ. My manuscript remains untouched save for a few beginnings and a few

corrections. This ordinary man seems to be too busy, too matter-of-fact, to lay hold of the poetry of life and be that. As a portrait of Christ I am afraid he is a failure. Which means once more that I myself have failed.

I try another man. He is a sad-eyed wan-faced being, pacing to and fro on a bridge over a river. He has a look of tragic poetry in his visage, has been a poet once, perhaps, but the poetry has left him, and he is now trying to decide whether 'twere better to endure the ills he has or fly to others that we know not of. And when I tell him I have chosen him he gives no smiling answer back but remains still in his gloom.

"Life does not mean much to you?" I ask.

"Then perchance you are just the one who can be Christ to me," I proceed. "He who would lose his life shall save it."

"No, I am a failure," says he. "I have come to the end."

"Are you a believer in Christ?"

"Believer! Friend, I am a lover, and I love Him so much that I will shortly join Him, go to Him, and be one with Him—

For all we gain,
Until we come to Him is vain."

I try to persuade him to think better of life, but he laughs hollowly at my words.

"What is it?" I ask soothingly. "Is it pain that gives you a distaste for life?"

"It is life itself, this wretched partial existence, that disgusts me. It is loneliness and life-weariness."

"But our life is part of the universal eternal life," say I. "A very small part, but still a part, an actual fraction of eternity."

"Oh, no," says he. "A libel on eternity. Eternity is always going on, but our life is not on eternity's plane; it is a wretched conditional existence. I have had ideals, but I could never even begin to realise them here. Only with Christ can I make a beginning. I have tried for thirty years to write Alpha, and I believe you seriously fear that I am about to write Omega. Only after I have plunged into the river shall I write my true *Alpha*—

And say to Him, What shall I be?
O Master, smite, but make me free,
Perchance in these far worlds to be
The better thing I sought to be.

I am a failure, humanity is a failure. What can I do? What can they do?"

And he continues crooning a melancholy poem to which there is no answer. Alone there courses through my soul the thought, "In what sad plight I find my figure of Christ. He needs my help. Yet I cannot help him." I feel that Christ is in him, and yet clearly this man does not speak or act like a Christ. He is a little mad. If Christ had gone mad, He might have spoken somewhat as this suicide speaks.

I pull him towards the gloom of the lower parts of the city and he croons as he goes—

"Upon thy couch lie down
And fold the hands which have not sown,
And as thou liest there alone,
Perhaps some breath of seraph blown
As soft as dew upon the rose
Will fall upon thee at life's close,
And thou wilt say, At last! At last!
All pain is love, when pain is past.
Then to the Master once again—
Oh, keep my heart too weak to pray;
I ask no longer questions vain
Of life and love, of loss and gain,
These for the living are and strong—
I go to Thee, to Thee belong." [1]

[1] R. James.

And with that I let him go back. I feel he knows his own need better than I do mine. As a portrait of Christ he is a failure, however, and once more I fail.

I choose then another. This time a lover and a poet. He is a plain man made handsome by his passion, an inarticulate one made vocal by love. He gladly gives me his confidence. He cares infinitely for another, and would be ready to die or be annihilated for her sake. "I was an egoist till I fell in love," says he; "I cared for nothing but my own personal rights and interests. I confess I was a selfish person. But now I would lay down everything for another. It is strange, but I am ready to be swallowed up and forgotten and utterly lost in the personality of my beloved."

I find this to be suggestive of Christ in man—this readiness to sink self in another's life and individuality. The lover prompts some words of the drama. But he marries, begets children, and anon is egoist as before. As a portrait of Christ he showed gleams of the miracle. But as I see him now he is, alas, a failure. And I fail.

Another man at random in the fast-flowing crowd.

He is a politician, and ready to stake life and money and happiness for a principle or a political ideal. He is full of noble wrath at the spectacle of tyranny. He votes conscientiously at all elections, and canvasses all stupid neighbours to give up their own opinions and vote as he does. In the name of his ideal he occasionally refuses to pay taxes to Caesar. He is a substantial man of conscience. He prays and believes. He is a follower of Jesus. Jesus is his invisible, political captain, and he serves under Him against money-changers and sellers of the Spirit, would-be stoners of the unfortunate, against Pharisees, priests, and scribes, Caesars, Pilates, Herods. He lives strenuously, his lamp is lit, his loins are girded; he makes out of life a big thing and stakes high.

I meet also a reactionary who sees the seamy side of the Liberal's life, the dreary industrial background of his vision. He understands something the politician does not—that man is independent of material progress, does not need it. He sees the true beauty of individual man in his ability to rise superior to all material things. But he and all the rest seem failures as portraits of Christ. It is the

same with other nationalities also. I take a Russian, a German, a Frenchman, an American, and many others; but I cannot accept a Russian Christ as enough for me, nor a German Christ, nor a French, nor an American. All the portraits have truth in them, but they are not complete, not satisfying.

Curious that in Art it is as in life. Portraits of Christ are all more or less failures. The painter may have felt that he expressed what he meant but others are not satisfied. It may be his Christ, it is not ours. It seems to have been always impossible to paint truly the face of Christ. Hence, I suppose, the miraculous likeness, such as that on the shroud of Turin and the other on the handkerchief of Saint Veronica. And these are miserable, bitter, Judaic faces—not New Testament faces at all. The idea of the painters has been to make something which could pass as historical, authentic, a dead record. All that lives changes, so they wished to show definitely what Christ *was*. Probably a lower type of mind was at work when these pious representations were painted. Not that there is not a certain wistfulness and beautiful pathos in

these shroud-pictures and towel-prints. The wan faces of tens of millions of human beings have looked on them, tried to look into them, and these have given life, just as certain stone and wooden idols are said to have wrought miracles because of the faith of the worshippers—a theory which, however, many reject, for wood and stone cannot inspire the faith that removes mountains. Nevertheless, even a dead idol which has been worshipped by one human being has an atmosphere of human pathos which all but hallows it, and those "authentic" portraits have that pathos also. There is an infinite positive significance in the seeking eyes that look at the portraits and ask, "Art thou He? Art thou He, or do we look for another?" Thus it is beautiful legends arise round about objects which in themselves may be base. They do not take their rise from the fraud or the error, but from the living spirit of humanity seeking ever the truth of its own destiny. In the East, so far from keeping to the historical ikon faces, the variously miraculously delivered portraits, as if these were fact and all else must be fancy, painters take as their supreme task the painting of that type of portrait of Christ which

they call "NOT-BY-HANDS-CREATED." It is the sort of paradox one does not often find in our straightforward culture, the man painting with his hands, using all the skill of his fingers to paint a picture which he entitles the "Portrait not made by hands." It is the painter's claim of inspiration. He works in the medium of prayer; and without inspiration from God he cannot hope to portray Christ. He puts forth his arm and the Spirit teaches his hands. It is also a tacit confession that without miracle the face of Christ cannot be expressed, and it implies as tacitly that the Face when seen will be a miraculous one, a mystical one—that is, one which each human being can see according to his own light and love according to his own need. The likeness of the shroud of Turin is *par excellence* the portrait-made-by-hands, the would-be authentic; the other, the inspired and mystical picture, is the "NOT-BY-HANDS-CREATED."

Yet this lively conception derives from the dead towel-portrait idea. And it does so because of a legendary explanation of miraculous portraits. It is said that a painter came to Jesus whilst He was in the midst of the crowd and endeavoured to por-

tray Him, but failed because of the infinite way the expression of the face changed. It reflected constantly the faces of those in the crowd who had need of Him, and was not one face so much as five thousand in one. Jesus therefore took a towel and pressed it to His face saying, "The portrait of Christ may not be drawn by hands lest at any time it should be said this and this only was Christ." And He gave to the painter the miraculous likeness imprinted on the towel, and then the further blessing, "Thou couldst not paint My face for the reflection there of the face of the common man. Behold, henceforth thou shalt not attempt to paint the face of any common man, but shalt find My face there also."

It is a curious way of explaining that the painter was after all able to paint a miraculous likeness—one *not made by hands*. The endeavour of all the mystical painters after him has been to paint a miraculous face in which the whole of praying and yearning and suffering, and even cursing humanity is somehow reflected.

The shroud of Turin needs to be held to the light, and then the Divine features are vaguely apparent

ON THE SHROUD OF TURIN

in the texture. Some one has said that the only test of its genuineness would be a chemical analysis. The only test of the mystical portrait, however, is in that the common doubting man standing in front of it should confess, "My Lord and my God." If a man's heart is touched, Christ must be there to touch it.

I show to an ordinary man a copy of Vasnetsof's wonderful picture. He gives it more attention than I expect, rivets his eyes upon it and wishes a copy for himself. "All portraits of Christ are failures, but this one somehow touches me. It is the first I ever cared for," says he. I show it to a lover and he wants it for his love, and to a politician and he wants to hang it in the Liberal Club. So it seems I find a common ground; for I also hail this face as that of Christ.

I find a personality in myself which accepts the soul of the picture—it is the highest aspect of my personality, and I am ready to sacrifice all else to it. The ordinary man and the rest also find in the picture something which answers to a desire in themselves. I can therefore go back to the crowd and take the chance passer-by once more and find

the Christ in him by aid of the picture, let him be Christ to me, and prompt the words of my drama.

"You acknowledge this picture to be Christ," say I. "I also acknowledge it to be Him. But I do not feel I altogether know Him. I know partly what He was nineteen hundred years ago, but I urgently need to know what He is to-day, what He means now, and what are His intentions." I do not tell him of my mystery play, in which Christ must play the central part. But I ask him to tell me about the Divine Man he sees in my miraculous picture.

He tells me he sees a Being infinitely understanding, infinitely loving. He sees the Redeemer. He tells me the face says to him that whoever despises him, there is One to whom he is not despicable, One who has a place for him in His kingdom. He finds the most complete consolation and reconciliation with destiny in the picture.

"Is there one thing more than another that the picture means to you?" I ask.

He blushes and looks awkward, as if I had uncovered a secret, but then takes faith through my earnestness, and answers in these words:

"I should not have thought you needed to ask. To me it shows a face that understands completely the torments of the desires of the flesh, one who understands that the flesh which lusts is not the ego, one who confirms a poor struggling failing being in His Godhead and does not leave him in death and disease. I see in that picture the outstretched hand that saved Peter when he was sinking into the waves. I hold it and I get home."

So that is what the picture means to the chance passer-by.

I understand what I should not otherwise have guessed, that this brother human suffers torments through low desire. For him the title of the picture might almost be "Saviour of all who suffer from low desires." But the picture does not appeal to me in that way, and that aspect of it had not occurred to my mind. I take the picture to the man who for twenty years has lived the life of an ascetic, and he is as much enraptured by it as the other—but for a totally opposite reason. I tell my chance passer-by what for my part I find in the picture, and he disagrees with me, disagrees so violently that he is almost ready to quarrel. So even

the miraculous portrait is somewhat of a failure. At least I do not seem altogether to be able to find the new Christ among men by the help of it.

I try the man who is tired of life: he sees the Christ who though He could save Himself refused to come down from the cross. I try the lover. He sees the link which unites him with his beloved. I try the politician, and he sees a face that men will die for. The scientist says it is the whole sense of Evolution: some call Him Evolution, others call Him God. The musician sees the substance of music; the poet of poetry; the sculptor divines form and majesty of bearing, the inner secret of outward beauty; the painter, the spirituality of the surface and the shadow; the soldier sees what makes for *esprit de corps*; the sailor sees the face among the stars.

I am driven to the conclusion that wonderful as is this miraculous picture in that it can be Christ to so many different eyes, it is almost as much a failure as mankind is, inasmuch as besides reflecting Christ it reflects also endlessly broken and suffering and varying humanity. Each man sees the

apology for his own life, and few are capable of seeing in it at the same time the apology for their neighbours' lives. There lie the limits of the picture, or of humanity, or of myself. I suppose only in heaven is the archetype of the miraculous portrait, only there is the great real Face with the myriads of changing reflections of humanity within it. And I cannot obtain that greater vision unless I find some one who can be a little window to heaven for me.

I will try myself. Necessarily I am much less intimate with the chance passer-by than I am with myself. It is possible to probe a deeper abyss in my own soul than in that of my neighbour. It is difficult to probe far into a neighbour's soul. Even good manners keep one to the surface. It is indiscreet to put my questions to him, but I could not easily be indiscreet in the questions I put to myself.

There is a Christ in me: who is He? 'Tis not indiscreet to ask. Nevertheless some one in my being does feel taken aback even though *I* ask it. Though the question may not be indiscreet to ask,

it may be indiscreet to answer. In any case, the question is too blunt and must remain unanswered for a while.

I am a little shy of the Christ in me. To tell of Him is to turn into an egoist. For when He is in question I seem to place a value on myself higher than on any one else in the world.

I suppose that if another were seeking Christ, as I do now, in the chance passer-by, and I passed by, he might discern behind my ordinary features those other shadowy and more beautiful lineaments which I for my part descry as I now look upon the man in the crowd. The mysterious better face of humanity stands behind me also. And it is the face of a person. I know that person—it is my *alter ego*. From lower nature, from the animal side of me of which the ego is instinctively ashamed, there is always another being growing invisibly. Something of Him is half-visible in my eyes. Yes, that is He. I should be a disgusting creature but for Him. In all this sordidness called life He just makes the difference between worth while and not worth while.

"Hullo, little boy, you've been beaten," came

His first whisper when He soothed me, and comforted me, and dried my cheeks, and brightened my eyes, and bade me forget the shame and live as if it had not been. I forgot what I had been crying about, and forgot also the comforting and soothing other self till another occasion arose, and yet another. I became conscious of Him again on long walks, when my mind did not think, but was placidly set upon something unknown, unrealised. He was with me—or rather I was with Him.

> A boy's will is the wind's will,
> And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.

Yes, because he does not know what he is thinking. He feels out toward the ideal as plants turn to the sun.

But the boy of these days was ill-kempt and untidy, speaking the language of the street, mischievous and pugnacious. I did many things which caused me shame, and the prayers which my mother taught me to say at her knee I forgot. I used foul language, as we all did at school. Then later I voluntarily and on some mysterious impulse gave up the bad language and remembered the prayers I

used to say. I began consciously to wish to be good, and experienced the sweet moments of new resolutions. I fought my way through jungles of sordid life, and though I failed and failed again, I had always a personal secret, a life which I led with an *alter ego* in myself. When in great difficulties I used to pray myself out of them, and when my mind began to analyse and ask questions concerning God, I used to answer thus:

"The kingdom of heaven is within me, is it not? God is in heaven. God therefore is within me. And if I pray, I pray to one who is within me. God is almighty. Then with prayer I also might be almighty."

All hymns about Jesus as friend appealed to me as to so many with soul-ravishing attractiveness—

> I've found a Friend; O such a Friend!
> He loved me ere I knew Him.

That friend was the sweet, better personality in my bosom, my ideal self, my *alter ego*, as I have called Him.

I began to have a period of love, and longing for self-sacrifice. I formed passionate attachments

to various comrades. I had a childish desire to die for them somehow, to show how much I loved them, or that I might appear beautiful in their eyes.

I also began to read various romances and fall in love with the heroes. After reading *Morte D'Arthur* I dreamed myself Lancelot, and then Tristram, and then Galahad. After *Ivanhoe* I was Wilfrid. I rescued maidens and killed giants, and jousted with splendour at many tournaments. At the same time, however, was I not stupid, mulish, lazy, inaccurate, and mischievous? As a punishment I had once to write a hundred times in a fair hand, "Samson was a strong man, Solomon was a wise man, but I am a donkey," which I indeed slavishly wrote.

The *alter ego*, however, was never touched by the world unless I felt shamed or hurt. And then He would come to the rescue and take me apart, and console me, and breathe secret life and power into me.

So it was in the after years of first working for a living. The ideal personality obtained more sway in me, and I began to live in daily conscious-

ness that I, the true ego of me, was a celestial being, one higher than any one dreamed or than I could openly assume. I grew in spiritual stature and watched myself changing. I marvelled at the new life. My direct centre of consciousness began to move from the lower towards the higher ego, and as it did so I became vocal and wrote poetry, read poetry, lived in poetry. I walked with feet on the earth and head in the sky. From then till now I have been conscious of a spiritual truth, in the atmosphere of which I have lived, so that all the negative values of earth-living have become positive values of absolute-living. And I have grown to identify myself with the ideal personality within. Not that it is quite possible. There clings somewhat of the lower, and as for the higher there remains an infinite which I have not reached. Indeed as I live from day to day, my *alter ego*, this Christ in me, seems to grow also, and projects beyond me like a flower which the earth nurtures and loves. I am lured on further from day to day into a new spiritual plane where the flower is growing and budding. I call it a seeking, but it is in truth a *becoming*.

Something I seem to be spending, and that is of the flesh, physical energy, lower life. But all the while I am becoming. I am growing into another plane. I am obtaining a higher consciousness.

Belief in my ideal self, the almighty in me, has made me a sort of spiritual egoist. I might have been an egoist in a different way, it is true. I might have rejoiced in good looks, in physical strength, in scholarship or intellectual attainments, in will power or in success. Had I become a champion boxer, I might have been an egoist for that reason. I might have been a great arithmetician, and have felt that I had no equal as a mathematical mind. I might have been honest, and accurate, and dutiful, and then possessed the egoism of the elder brother. I might have been a philosopher, an intellectual don, and been proud of my use of words and arguments as foils and fence. If I had been very heavy, I might have been proud of my weight. I might have been proud of conquests among women. But instead of all these things I have the egoism of the failure who identifies himself not with the failing being, but with the celestial and almighty being within.

When wrestled in the ring; when unable to compete with my neighbour in eating and drinking; when cut off from a lady's regard by some one more handsome; when admitting that my philosophical opponent has proved his case; when found wanting as a model citizen; when reduced as a prodigal to feed among the swine, I have always had the joy of a spiritual reservation. Though among you, I am not of you; though beaten, I am unconquered and unconquerable. That is the egoism of the failure. He knows that there is something in him which does not fail.

It leads to a higher consciousness. The ego tends to enlarge and take to itself something more, begins to find a common ground with the spiritual *I* in other people, and to experience a sense of unity with it. My ego extends to hold two, so that for the first time the first person plural in our Lord's prayer seems to be felicitous—"*Our* Father which art in heaven." I strive to recognise in the mass of humanity the *we* of which this *our* is spoken. It is the unity of all the *alter egos*. The higher consciousness which I discern is the recognition of unity. I can love any one in whom I discern an

ideal self over and above the ordinary self. The sense for this ideal self in every one prompted me to seek the Christ-face in the passer-by. And throughout my quest so far I have been preoccupied with the sense for unity. Now I am beginning to understand that not only have I a sense for unity but a knowledge of actual unity.

All these other gleams of ideal personality in human beings are one and the same thing. Every man possesses an ideal self, whether he be conscious of it or not, and all the ideal selves of all men are one and the same. They have the same consciousness and are truly one. They seem all separate and yet are all one body. There is one ideal body of all humanity—as it were a tree of Christ in our background.

There must be an invisible system of branches connecting all individuals past and present and showing them as one system. It is all Christ. That is what He meant when He said, "I am the vine: ye are the branches"—I am the whole vine: ye are the branches which make up the vine.

That is the Christ which I see. Yet He is not a tree. He is man and God. He is our sum total

on the ideal side; He is also the smallest, most intimate, private friend; He is the face behind the ordinary face of the passing man. He has therefore infinite variety of face and of expression; He is also one face, and one alone. He is sweet and wise, not predatory and brute-like. His substance is love. He is our leader. He is an invisible but truly infallible Pope. Or rather, He is almost visible: following Him, even though we discern Him vaguely, we cannot go wrong—the highest light of each individual being. Higher types of humanity are those in which He shines out more clearly; degenerate types are those which are far from the consciousness of being Christ-men. Observe a divergence of opinion here as to who are degenerates. The common criterion is the superman—he is a degenerate who is furthest from being a Napoleon or a Sandow. But in this truer light of reason Napoleon himself may be a degenerate. The animal triumphant in man *is* degeneracy.

Whilst thus I moralise there comes out of the crowd unbidden, uninvited, a new and unusual type of man, prompted somehow to apply himself to me.

And instead of my choosing him as I have been choosing others and considering them, suddenly he chooses me. He is a Southern Slav, a representative of one of the ruined peoples of the Balkans. His country, Serbia, is lost. He tells me he has ceased to be a Serb, because Serbia is not any more and cannot be again what it was, even if it should rise from death. He calls himself a European, and pleads that all should obtain, in addition to consciousness of nationality, the higher consciousness of being Europeans. With an almost alarming rapidity he engages me in most earnest converse. We walk along the crowded thoroughfare, and just ahead of us in the throng is a nurse wheeling out a young sleeping babe. "That child," says Dushan, "must first learn to be a human being, then to be English at the same time, then to be a simple human being, English and European at the same time, and then to be pan-human—

INFANT
INDIVIDUAL
NATIONAL
GROUP-NATIONAL
UNIVERSAL

The sun shines on the baby; it smiles and sneezes, as it were, at its tremendous programme—

Worm
Devil
Man
Christ
God,"

says the Serb, "that is the true progress of humanity."

I take him to my old professor, who expounds to him universal history, and the old man reacts to him perfectly. I have never seen more sense of unity and happiness than in these two scholars talking to one another with the joy of children, and all about the Christ in whom all nations have lived and moved and had their being.

I take him to my friends in turn, and he, unbalanced and enthusiastic as he is, seems always to give them happiness, make them whole. They are the most varied of people, but this Dushan seems alive on all sides. He is a sort of mystical fraction which, added to any other fraction, always makes up unity.

For no fraction is natural—or rather, all frac-

tions are naturally complementary and wait for others to bring them to unity. Thus you may be seven twenty-thirds. Well, somewhere a sixteen twenty-thirds is waiting for you. I may be seven-tenths—somewhere there is a three-tenths waiting. Yonder fellow is a five ninety-ninths—somewhere must be a ninety-four ninety-ninths. But there exists a mystical fraction, a fraction which makes each different other fraction up to unity, can be the necessary sixteen twenty-thirds for you, but coming to me is at once changed to three-tenths; coming to the other it is his ninety-four ninety-ninths. Such would be a mystical or miracle-working fraction. This mystical fraction is Christ the man. He worked infinitely various miracles with men. Christ on the cross is the statement of the fraction, the fact, but also the hieroglyphic. For note: to be a fraction is to be broken. Christ on the cross can be applied to any human being who is living a partial existence and he will be saved, will be enfranchised in the all. When the phrenologist said that the face of Christ was unbalanced, I felt that it was true. It had to be unbalanced to redress our infinitely varying deficiencies. His was a face in

which must be myriads of complementary fractions.

There is something of this nature about Dushan, that is why I have called him a mystical fraction, a phrase that I thought rightly applied only to Christ.

The fact that Dushan has come is part of my seeking, or rather of my finding. He is going to help me to fill in the words of my drama.

"You are seeking Christ?" says he. "You believe in the unity of all in Him. Well, then, let us work for that unity, for the consciousness of it throughout the world. That is Christianity itself. If we can find ten who believe as you believe, then in ten years all Europe will realise Christ, and within our life-time China and India will come in. Let us begin to-day and endeavour to realise universal consciousness of unity in Christ."

We go out together to reconsider humanity, and I think now as I see the great throngs of humans, "Something is in you, something after all can be made out of you." First, we go to the slums, where fractional humanity seems so small that hundreds together might not make one. We pass along the river-side where the little houses of the poor are crowded around factories, and men, women, and

children look to one point above them—the smoking summit of the high factory chimney. The women's faces reflect soul-killing drudgery; the children's faces, though bright, are broken and spoiled, often perverted, or too dirty for even human features to be seen. Even so there seems more possibility of Christ's face being seen in the least of these than in the faces of their parents. They all live in a world we do not know. The air is different, and it is difficult for us to breathe, being full of the odours of chemicals and decay, as if humanity had been disintegrated and by some ghastly artificial process were being put together again. A thousand families are living day and night, and months and years in an atmosphere which we hurry through, in the odour of soap manufacture. Another thousand are played on continually by blighting sulphurous fumes. Here comes a mulatto; he enters a wretched dwelling and is met by two yellow girls and a yellow mother. No, not half-breeds; they have been so coloured by the fumes in which they work. On many men and women are unnatural scars and civilisation-marks. A strike is in progress and savage rebellion is written

in many faces; there is visible an active will to make mischief and increase disaffection. We hear various expressions of opinion on their behaviour on the part of employers, the chief being that it is sad to see such a lack of the spirit of self-sacrifice, no one is ready to sink his personal interest for the *bigger* thing. The strikers are called shirkers. It is said with truth that no one will do any more work than he is forced to do, even when he is satisfied with the terms of his employment. Young folk talk of giving up everything and going on their own, or going to America, of "cutting themselves adrift." Young men are sacrificing others to their own life and freedom; young women also; though it is equally true that many are sacrificing their own life and freedom and chances of development for others who depend on their work. The former are despised by employers, the latter petted and approved. The married men are considered better "hands" because it is less easy for them to rebel. To the free and unencumbered younger ones the employer says, "You must look at your work heroically. Remember that it is your duty. It is the

place to which God has called you. Your happiness lies in fulfilling your part well. You must not take a narrow and selfish point of view. Humanity is in reality all one, and if you do your part the whole body politic is the gainer. You want to cut yourself adrift, but you know what the poet says:

> To be a whole is to be small and weak,
> To be a part is to be great and mighty."

On hearing this advice we are somewhat astonished, hearing our own gospel used to enforce industrial slavery. The sense of the verse is haunting—"To be a part is great and mighty." Part of what? That, I suppose, is the great question. So Dushan asks: To be part of what? The employer gazes at us, and then waves his hand about him, indicating factory shafts and warehouses and workshops, bridges, cranes, viaducts, houses and shops, churches. "It is visible," says he. "It's all about you: part of all that. Is that not grand enough?"

"That is sufficiently curious," says Dushan, smiling. "We must have more of that English poem. That cannot be what the poet intended. To be one

brick in Jerusalem the Heavenly is to be truly great, but to be a mighty pillar in Rome itself is to be too small."

We meet a writer on the staff of a powerful newspaper; he writes articles every day, printed without a signature. He also tells us he has grasped the great truth, that to be a part is to be great and mighty. He could not hope to wield the power he has if he came out and wrote simply for himself and from himself what he had to say. He is proud to be part of a great newspaper, of a great collective expression of opinion.

We meet many priests, and they also are proud to be *part*. Dushan does not like the *official* as such. But the priest tells us what a difference it makes when a man puts on the vestments of God. Just as a raw youth obtains a certain dignity not his own when he puts on the uniform of soldier, or policeman, or commissionaire; he becomes greater because he has given up his individuality to become part of something larger. So in the highest degree with the man who enters the Church; he becomes something greater than he could ever hope to be as an individual. When he is ordained he gives up

the rhythm of his old life. The simple way is merged in a greater way, and he finds that instead of walking apart he is marching in the great procession of the Church.

But is it really so in reality? Does not the young priest seem to have lost when he puts on the "cloth" or his vestment? Is he not actually handicapped by it? It might become true if each priest were at liberty to think out his own vestment and express through it his particular relationship to God and to us all. But then the idea of uniform would be lost. For my part, I think the leaves of the Bible meant more before they were put into the uniform of print. When each illuminator glorified the Word variously there was more life. There is an unmistakable sense of greater truth and life in an illuminated Bible than in a printed one. When you read a chapter which has been illuminated it is as if reading the chapter for the first time. There is the same difference felt in the contrast of the wafer with its mechanically produced emblem of Christ crucified imprinted upon it and the simple broken bread. On the whole, uniform in religion is a handicap disguising the glory of the

multiform. The unity of the Church is an inner unity, not an outer one.

I find agreement with this thought more among Puritan ministers and the Friends, but complete disagreement in the priest of the Catholic Church. Each Roman priest, however humble, has the consciousness of being part of the greatest organisation of the visible Church. All members of that Church have also that sense of being part of a mighty whole, of something which now is great and shall be universal. They do not deny inner unity, but do require an external unity.

"The Church of Rome, however, even with success, the vast material success which it requires, would not correspond to the vision that human consciousness already holds of a universal spiritual unity which might be realisable," said the Serbian. "There is a worldly as well as a spiritual truth in the words of the poet. But we must find out how the poem goes on."

We go into a public library and a librarian finds for us the necessary volume of Kingsley. Ah, yes, here it is, here are the words:

To be a whole is to be small and weak,
To be a part is to be great and mighty,
In the one spirit of the mighty whole,
The spirit of the martyrs and the saints.

Dushan, in excitement, strikes me on the back as I read. I give the book back. "We know now," cries the Serbian, "what it is necessary to be a part of in order to be truly great and mighty—not civilisation, not the 'combine,' not the visible Church, but part of the communion of saints, part of the living and the dead in Christ, the all-one, the intangible and unseen Christendom."

The Quest of the Face resolves into a quest of that true splendour, the endeavour to obtain a true and complete and ever-present consciousness of its existence. The great mystery play has a rôle for all humanity. "All true Christian things must be joined," says my friend. "Our activities can be manifold. We approach each new person on his characteristic and individual side. One way in which the face of Christ may be seen is through the unity of Christendom. At present Christendom seems to be divided against itself. We must work for the consciousness of unity in all churches. I

do not mean a unity brought about by denying all creeds except one, but a unity brought about by correlating and including all creeds."

"Not by creed-smashing, as the American phrase goes," I interject.

"No, rather by creed-building and creed-supporting."

"You want a true Catholic Church?"

"Yes."

"But in what way would united Christendom differ from the Roman Church if its dream were fully realised?"

"You would see the difference. Roman Catholic Christendom disallows other modes of expression than its own. In modern times it has become more liberal and tolerant outwardly than of old. But the essence of its idea is still a universal uniformity. It has a standardised Christianity and has one pattern which it wishes all men to wear. Those who will not wear it are still tacitly heretics. In a lesser way other churches are chargeable on the same count. But the true united Christendom will be one of complete mutual understanding. Tolerance must come first, and then joy in difference,

glory to God for the diversity of His creatures."

God, we agree, is no Hindenburg, no Kaiser, he is not a Prussian God imposing obedience. If He were, it would be quite simple, since He is omnipotent, to correct humanity to type. We know through Christ God does not expect us to conform to a type. He leaves us free as He has made us diverse. And the world in which we live is a marvellous diversity. The rose is not wrong, the lily is not wrong, the lion is not absurd, the tiger is not absurd, diamond does not contradict ruby. And in the same way man is compatible with man. There is a Diogenes and an Edison, an Achilles and a Bertrand Russell, and Zoroaster and General Booth and St. Peter and St. John, and Henry VIII. and Henry VI., and St. Sava and Father Nicholas, and the Archbishop of Canterbury and St. Francis of Assisi, and for an endless diverse humanity glory to God for ever and ever. Amen.

Through Christ we understand that the way of the Spirit is the way of truth. The Spirit manifests itself passively in an infinite number of ways. It should also manifest itself actively in as many ways.

"And the unity?" I ask.

"The unity is the consciousness that no one true way of expression contradicts any other true way. In that consciousness is unity. And for that the time has come to strive. All the sects and churches of the world are waiting in the darkness; but it is just before dawn. The connections between them will soon be seen: all will see them.

"But that is only a small part of the task. The visible churches as such are a very small fraction of humanity. They are good, but up till now, and perhaps still for a long while, they stand in the way of the realisation of a greater thing. Their official stamp, their rigidity is standing in the way of a free and living Christianity. There are millions of men and women who are in Christ yet not in any of the official churches. They must not be forgotten. The Christian consciousness of joy and love and unity must be brought to them in larger and ever larger numbers—so as to form a sort of invisible and unexpected complement to the churches.

"The churches are so hard to-day that the dress

and style of the priests and curates and ministers are unpopular with large masses of the people. And indeed those who wear the cloth are badly handicapped by it—worse handicapped by ecclesiastical system. Christianity has in it a stupendous depth of philosophic truth. It is so marvellous that it can win its way almost by itself—but not quite. It must be spread from heart to heart, cannot come simply from nowhere to the heart. It is an easy doctrine to propound and it is not difficult to bring it to the heart of a man. But how slow the progress along official ways!

"India, China, Japan, all must be brought in, and would be brought in if the best Christians went to them. But we do not send out our best. We send often stupid or shallow men who strive for numbers of baptisms, for vulgar number, not esteeming the deep religion and profound though old philosophic truth in the mind and tradition of the East. I know Buddhism, Confucianism, Brahminism,—these philosophies are deep and true. They are not shallow or absurd, they are not of the nature of idolatry or obscure nature-worship, and when

we send out men to bring fine thinkers and religious men to Christ we need to send the wisest that we have."

"Yes," said the Serb, with large eyes, "it could be done; the churches could be brought to Christ, those outside the churches and all the East. Then united humanity would be at hand. And when we are all one and at peace we shall see the Master coming. That is what you have asked to see, is it not, my friend?"

"Yes, even so."

Something further should follow from the union of Christendom and the mutual joy of the sects, and that is the union of the nations. As the true universal Church should include all the smaller would-be churches, so humanity, the true nation of God, should exhibit the mutual joy of all the would-be chosen nations. Nations are the sects of humanity as individuals are the sects of the nations. They are not meant to destroy one another but to amplify one another—to amplify one another toward the perfect man. French and Germans should in friendship make something larger than either. Russians and English should magnify one

another. Greeks and Italians and Serbs and Bulgars and Norwegians and Swedes, Spanish and Portuguese, instead of being jealous of one another, should be neighbours in Christian communion.

Yet if these high ideals are to be practically consummated, Christ in man must be an ascendant force, must be more and more triumphant in individuality. If the devil in man, or the animal, is the real characteristic thing, this can never come about. If ill-will, malevolence, hate, enmity, are characteristic, this can never come about. If satiety and normality, content and servility, the readiness to be a happy slave, are characteristic traits of humanity, then these high ideals can never be realised in any objective way. They can only exist as dreams in individual human hearts, as the transcendent realities of individual human lives.

If Nietzsche was altogether right, we are wrong. If Napoleon was right, we are wrong. If Rubeck was right, we are hopelessly wrong. If men are animals, we are wrong; if they are devils, we are wrong.

Dushan, who now leads in the adventure, turns his head less over his shoulder than I. He has a

more stedfast vision. He is the man vouchsafed to me from the crowd, and I shall faithfully record his words. He comes to me one evening, and I tell him as much as I can of my quest and my need. It appears that before I saw him he was as eager in the quest as I. We are two independent seekers who have met on life's road, an Englishman and a Slav, very different, and yet having the greatest of all things in common, a similar spiritual desire.

"Let us start a new social life," says he, "and begin an unorganised society to stand instead of Church and State. Let us begin seriously to realise the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. What is the use of going on for ever in the old way of politics, revenge, wars, separation? Let us pray for the end of the world, and prepare to make it ready for the end. The Church, the churches as churches stand in the way, as do statues and idols; they are all too visible and palpable. They have all contradicted one another in the Great War, have they not? Not one has gone against the State with which it was associated. Each and every has blessed the cause and the killing. Because they have been organised they have failed. Nothing

organised as we understand organisation can be part of the fabric of heaven. Everything that ever has been or ever will be organised will be struck as with a bar of iron and dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. It was left out of the old Judaic commandments: Thou shalt not organise; and it seems the Jews had more grace than we. It could not even enter their minds to imagine that the Kingdom could be organised. Though there were occasions when the unwritten commandment was infringed, as when David took a census of his people and was punished for that departure from dependence upon the immeasurable power of God. We for our part must be without visible form. We must be Christendom itself—the universal and indivisible.

"A universal society, unorganised, with no list of members, no subscriptions, no president or committee, no patrons, vice-patrons, no publicity or appeals to the Press. Every new member shall be a first member, and ought to tell others whom he meets, even if they be ourselves, what are the principles of the society as he conceives of them."

"I don't quite see this society coming into being.

How can we realise such a society without organisation?" say I.

"The new society is consciousness," he replies. "It is the mutual knowledge of Christian people that one and another have the Kingdom in their heart and eyes and the will to the building of it guiding their hands and feet. It is brotherhood and friendship and faith in an illimitable unseen brotherhood. It is a discovering of that which is even now existent in its beginnings but not visible."

"The Kingdom?"

"The Kingdom of Heaven at present latent in space, latent in society and the universe. It is held negatively in the air. What we have to do is to bring it on to the positive side, develop it."

To this I agree.

"Very good, let us begin," says he. "We must find those who are in agreement with us in spirit and in life, and realise in them a sacred fellowship, setting them on to realise the same in others. Whenever you meet a new face and can say in your heart—'So you also are of the Kingdom,' the society has been made larger by one man and the unity of Christendom has been extended."

In every man the face of Christ is to be descried. It follows, therefore, that every man in the world is on his ideal side qualified to enter this society and be part of it, part of the sacred communion of the universal and intangible Christendom.

It is something to work for, a quest to live for. And we look on men's faces anew.

The first man, however, whom we meet, and to whom we communicate the idea, gives us some discouragement. He is deeply interested, follows our thought closely, but eventually gives his verdict in these words: "Very idealistic: very, very wonderful; the most desirable thing that could possibly be imagined, and yet you know I hardly think it likely to be realised."

And he takes the idea and converses with many concerning it, makes it in fact a charming item of talk at ladies' tea-parties. And he always adds his remark, "Very idealistic, but not likely to come to anything, you know!"

Says Dushan, "In every man there is Christ, but only in that man is there no Christ whatever."

That, however, is uncharitable. He is only suffering from a sort of knock-knees, which is called

the English disease abroad, a type of paralysis of will, perhaps, accompanied with a mania for being a looker-on, a watcher and criticiser, not a doer and maker in the realm of the mind and the heart. Very characteristically twenty-two men play a match in our national game, and a hundred thousand look on and criticise and lay odds. Even in politics half the nation is looking on and watching, priding itself on anticipating the result, not so much wanting a side to win as wanting to be on the winning side. They do not so readily throw themselves into the cause which they think true and good, and work for it as if they had the power to realise it against any odds in the world. Our English disease—the disease of looking on.

At the outset also we come upon another who gives us pause, a third man working in the background of everyday life for the realisation of Christianity. He does not believe, but has this credo: Christianity has never been tried, so it is not a failure; why not give it a chance? This is Mr. H——, with his beautiful wife. They wish to form a new political party, the party of common sense. Christianity to them is the supreme com-

mon sense, the obvious thing which nobody will try! To them the advancement of the Kingdom is the giving of more education, the raising of wages and salary, the striking away of the fetters of servitude, the nationalisation of justice (the defraying of all law costs by the State), model housing, and minimum wages. As the party is the party of common sense, any one of intelligence is qualified to belong to it, even if in opposition to the programme it puts forth. It welcomes those of differing views, and appeals to all to co-operate for the general good. Here is Christianity masked by a practical programme—Peter's voice saying, "Let us build three tabernacles." But since they are so charitable, it follows we can help them. They believe very strongly in organisation; in fact they think all human ills can be removed by it. What is beautiful at least is that they desire to raise humanity. We long to give them the sense of the great consciousness. There may come a time when the idea of an unseen Kingdom of Heaven, which might seem laughable to Mr. and Mrs. H—— now, will be for them as realisable as for us.

At the outset also behold a novelist promulgating

the idea of a Theocracy: the dethronement of all visible kings in favour of an invisible one, namely God; the effigies of kings to be removed from our stamps and coins and the emblem of the dove to be substituted, so that it would be impossible for Christ again to find the image and superscription of Caesar on the money which should be paid as tribute. The novelist foresees the Kingdom. In this kingdom he says that when a lawyer becomes convinced that the client he is defending is in the wrong he will either give up his case or do his best to persuade the client to admit that he is not right. Rather an astonishing idea that lawyers will be necessary in the Kingdom, that they will still have any function to perform—a kingdom controlled by justice! The God of this kingdom is the "Captain of mankind," and He is served by a world of obedient individuals wholly efficiently serving Him. It seems to us to be a sort of Prussia transmuted into the domain of the eternal and absolute, with God as a blameless and perfect Kaiser. But I am certain that a kingdom founded on obedience rather than on impulse, and on justice rather than on love, is an anachronism. That is Babel, the tower to

which the tireless builders continually return, no matter how often its own inherent instability brings it down. Human personality is not in the nature of brick and beam, and that which joins us and makes us one, the cement of our eventual union, must have life in it, love in it. There are two opposite types of building: Babel and Sophia; Babel is the seemingly obvious and childish way of reaching Heaven. Babel is built with square blocks; it is structure founded on justice and right. Sophia is a temple not made by hands. Sophia is built of living bricks; it is founded on the love of God. Babel is superstitious alchemy; Sophia is spiritual alchemy. The objection which Catholics have to Masonry is that the Masons are builders of Babel; they inherit the traditions of Babel and would always restore Babylon, that is "the world," the material—evil Rome. But there are also spiritual masons, namely, those in the living wall of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Does not the secret of success in building lie in the architectural conception, in the places allocated to certain stones (for the stone which the builders rejected is the headstone of the corner), and is not the infinite stability

which is desired only to be obtained by a living cement which grows from and is grown into—the cement which is love? The theocracy of the Invisible King is the dream of a completed and stable Tower of Babel. But the voice of the novelist is the voice of the people thinking about change. I also read in his pages that he renounced the desire for personal immortality. His immortality shall be God. Once he rejoiced in the poet who wrote:

> I thank whatever gods there be
> For my unconquerable soul;

now his immortality is God. It bodes well to hear such a thought whispered in the streets by the man in the crowd. For to find one's immortality in God is to find it in the changeless and eternal Christendom which is now and is for ever.

I am in the midst of the world. Yes: I am also in the midst of the Church, in the midst of the true communion of Jesus. I am reminded of this by the example of my more intimate friends. They are such wonderful people. There is not one about whom one might not write a long novel. And even then no Dostoievsky could fully bring out the mar-

vellousness of God's creative hand apparent in their souls. There is not a friend who does not upon occasion make the heart ache by the infinite wonder of his nature. It evokes that which one can seldom show—a wish to help in life, to love and express love vitally and openly. The pathos of that consciousness is that the friend cannot meet friend, cannot be one with him when he has that insight into him. He remains apart and knows not what is in the other's heart. It is perchance for him a secular moment. It will be at a different time when the other's mind is full of secular care that he will look at him with the same aching joy and pain of knowledge and love. But for me it seems now that I am on the way to bridge over this separating ground by that mutual Christian consciousness in which it may be possible to exist and work.

I bring Dushan to Mr. N——, whose greatest interest in life is the treatment of children. I remember how he came in one day from visiting a home for boys, one for which he had lately become in a way responsible as patron and magistrate. "There has been an unpleasant case," said he. "A

boy has been found out in picking the pockets of the others. Marked coins were put in overcoat pockets, and one of the boys was found with the same marked coins in his possession. The master's idea was to cane him and expel him, send him away. But I said to him, 'It is no use sending him away to make trouble in some other place. The boy is your responsibility, and you've got to look after him.' I put it to the rest of the boys that they should decide what his punishment should be, and they made several suggestions, chiefly of thrashings. 'Well,' said I, 'I leave it to you boys to decide what is to be done. Remember he is one of you, and you can't get rid of him by sending him away, and you've got to go on living with him after you've punished him!' "

That is most characteristic of my friend Mr. N——. He is a practical Christian of to-day: he is after Dostoievsky.

Dushan does not at first see how this attitude touches us or the unorganised society. But I explain how it appears to me one point of departure for the practical realisation of the Kingdom. The large thing has always its integral unit, which is a

small and seemingly trivial thing when taken by itself. The new *attitude* is the practical aspect of a new *heart*. The new action follows from it.

Mr. N—— and his wife are two of the moving spirits who brought into existence the Children's Commonwealth, a republic of child "criminals" which manages its own affairs, rules itself, institutes its own laws, elects its parliament, its judges, and officers. Here the treasurer of the republic is one who was sent as an incorrigible thief, the despair of magistrates; the judge is a lad who has been several times birched. Boys and girls have equal rights in every department, and the good little mothers of the various public tables have been very naughty girls in the outside world.

One might well ask, Whatever would become of a state composed entirely of thieves, incendiaries, rascals, and beggars? Would it not be impossible? The righteous, including possibly ourselves, hold up our hands in horror. But we are mistaken. The so-called criminals are much more like ourselves than we take them to be. They will do all right if trusted. Distrust no doubt brings out the things we fear. Possibly all the crime in the world

is caused by distrust. Distrust is expecting the devil or animal in man to win; trust is expecting the Christ to win.

The attitude toward children can thus be a starting-point for practical Christianity. Under the old system the children had to be severely disciplined and watched over, punished, and upon occasion expelled. The schoolmaster was the tyrant. Under the new system which is now to be found here and there in Europe the child is trusted, discipline is left largely to the children themselves; they have freedom, and it is found that in that freedom they teach themselves more, and make a truer start in life than under the rigid standardising system. Montessori is practical Christianity. Old education endeavours to produce a type, or raise to a given standard. New education recognises that each individual human heart is different and is capable of a distinct perfection of its own. The true natural beauty in each child must be allowed to develop, must not be curbed in favour of some governmental standard.

In a school there is one boy meant to be a lyrical poet, another to be a wanderer and seeker,

a third to be a student and lover of birds, a fourth to be a soldier, a fifth to be a priest, a sixth to be a preacher, a seventh to be a fisherman, an eighth to be a farmer, but all are being trained to be clerks and taught shorthand and indexing and commercial geography; or they are being given a gentleman's education and standardised on dead French and Latin and Greek and remote unnecessary science. They are not given scope to show their natural gifts and propensities, and so they die or are warped—most commonly warped. The least gifted become often the best scholars and the most gifted commit crimes.

The masters believe in themselves, in their boards and birches and syllabuses and curriculums, examinations, and prizes. They do not believe in the children. But this attitude is going. The children themselves must be allowed to humanise these pedagogic houses of correction. They must be given all manner of power of initiation in educating themselves. I like that custom which exists in one of the public schools of Britain, of granting sanctuary to the boy during the first fortnight of his school life. During that first fortnight at school he

may commit any crime he likes—against the school laws, against his masters, against his fellow-pupils—and no punishment whatever will come to him from the school authorities. In that fortnight the boy realises, as a rule, that the wrong he does merely injures his fellow and does not do him personally any good whatever. After the first fortnight he keeps the school rules much better than he would have done if he had not learned what it meant to break them. That is a good start.

To believe practically in the inherent goodness of the child is a long step toward believing in the goodness of humanity. As at a turn in my quest I part company with a friend and I seek the Christ in the passing crowd, he the superman, devil or animal, so he who trusts the child, even the child-criminal, is with us, and he is co-operating with the eternal spiritual tendencies.

We set out, therefore, to find teachers and school inspectors who have faith, and we acquaint them with one another and with the larger vision of which their little parts are essential portions. And it greatly rejoices those whom we find: the message is one for which they have been yearning. Living

in isolation, often condemned by those around them, they have often despaired and almost given up. But the practical realisation that many are working with them and that they belong to a great company confirms them and nourishes them. Our message is Christ the living bread, which must come to those working, as the poet said, "in the squalid streets of Bethnal Green."

One day a political agent came to one whom we know and wished him to have his name placed on a register so that he might have full rights of citizenship and vote at the next election. It was an extraordinary bathos; for he had just obtained enfranchisement of the Kingdom and had turned his face toward a different capital and seat of government.

The attitude towards children is bed-rock. For the child comes before the man. But when school life gives way to the freer and more responsible existence there is a similar new Christian attitude toward one's fellow-man, towards society as a whole, a new social criterion or standard.

Dushan told me that as a child he was not brought up on Christian principles, but obtained

his joys by stealth like a little Spartan, and his joys were in breaking laws. Laws were made to be broken, and the resultant punishments were the obvious hazards for a game. He learned in the larger school of life—is learning in that school. And we may fittingly ask at this stage of the quest, "What exactly is wrong with this larger school of the world? What is really old-fashioned, out of date there?"

Be it remarked in passing that whatever is wrong is really old-fashioned, very old-fashioned. We can safely reproach the criminal in that he is very old-fashioned and out of date in his doings—"Oh dear, you are terribly old-fashioned, fearfully out of date, shockingly unoriginal—like the story of Cain and Abel, or of David and Uriah."

What are the old-fashioned things in the school of the world? We recognise them at once:

Hate.
Punishment.
Readiness to condemn: intolerance.
Mechanical control of individuals.
The servility of the masses.
The consequent vulgarity.
Man not living according to his true dignity.

The feeling of being responsible for oneself alone and not in any way responsible for what others do.

These things are not separate, but part of an old ramshackle system according to which man has hitherto lived.

The righteous magistrate is of opinion that Mr. X, who lives on the immoral earnings of a woman, must be severely flogged. He does not see that if that is so, he, the magistrate, ought also to be flogged, and so ought I—indeed, who ought not? As when Christ defended the woman accused of adultery, there is no one without sin in this matter. Mr. X exists, therefore I partly live on the immoral earnings of a woman, so does the righteous magistrate.

Mrs. J. has been convicted of fiendish cruelty to children. "Is she not to be punished, then?" asks the magistrate. In Mrs. J. the fiend is predominant, the devil has got a-top. And, as we know, there is a devil in all of us—only most of us strive away from it toward the Christ in us. Humanity on the whole tends toward Christ, not toward the devil. Still Mrs. J. and her like exist in the midst

of us. What is to be done with her? She cannot be allowed to go on torturing children. On the other hand, it is no use lashing her or giving her penal servitude. Most probably she could not be otherwise than she is. Through fear of consequences we might force her to keep her hands off the children. But then she would go about the world with hating and malignant eyes. Her voice would obtain a new wickedness. She would bring out the devil of cruelty in others, suggest the lust of torture to minds where Christ and devil are only just balanced. It is better to make for her a special sort of asylum, have horror at the devil, and stand in an attitude of patient love towards her. For her true ego is not this hating, torturing spirit. An old devil, from which humanity as a whole is moving away, is localised in her and has terrific power. The devil, being purged from the body politic, has come to a loathsome head at one spot, that spot is this Mrs. J.

The problem cannot be solved right out but it will be solved in time. We can best help by understanding what subconscious spiritual suffering goes on in the being of the cruel person, by remaining

in an attitude of love, remembering that in the cruel one we also are cruel, we have an ex-physical strain of cruelty localised in Mrs. J. or in her like.

Individual wisdom prompted by love must be allowed to deal with such cases. It does not matter what the treatment is as long as the attitude is true. Getting rid of the devil or animal or lower being altogether is a difficult problem and a long problem, but we are more on the way to it when we are prejudiced by the spirit of love and the sense of unity.

We loathe the procurer, the child-torturer, the street-woman, the person who for any reason has ever been in prison, the divorced, the bankrupt, the publicly disgraced, the quack prophet, the hypocrite, the person belonging to the opposite party, the publican, the drunkard, the gambler, the fraudulent company-promoter, the self-advertiser, the person who belongs to a different sect of the Church, the man who loves incense and ritual, the dull Puritan, the eccentric believer, the psychic, the spiritualist, the Theosophist, the person who says he believes but understands nothing, the person who seems to understand but does not believe, the per-

son who dresses differently, lives in a different type of house, the person "mad" for a different hobby, the vegetarian, the meat-eater . . . to an infinity of diversified dislike or disgust.

It's all very old-fashioned. Instead of this intolerance let us seek joy in difference, joy in God's handiwork, delight in manifold expression; instead of condemnation and hate, understanding and love; instead of punishments and deterrents, means of putting in the true way of life and understanding.

It is said that hate gives life a zest and an interest. It may be so, but it is nothing to the zest and interest which come through understanding. Even the study of natural history gives a satisfying joy, and if the ways of men and women be studied merely on the low level of natural history, there is a greater joy than in intolerance and hate. And natural history is a stepping-stone to Divine history.

There are two paths: one, the path of mechanical control; the other, the path of self-realisation.[1] The first path is the old, the second the new. The first is checked by condemnation of error and pun-

[1] Developed with literary power in *What Is and What Might Be*, by Edmond Holmes.

ishment; the second must be allowed to be checked by the promptings of the individual human heart with infinite allowance made.

In the great community of humanity—I do not mean merely the crowd, but in the great community of which the passing crowd is a part—there is a becoming, a changing. New types are being cast up and may be found. These new types are not the supermen so confidently expected a while ago, but Christ-types. I do not mean prophet-types, though the character and life of these new types has in it something of the prophetical. The types of which I speak are those we seek—the men and women whose steps are turning naturally along the new path. For instance, all who make spiritual choice are of the new; those who simply obey are of the old. Those who go out on adventures involving pain and hardship are of the new; those who cling to the comfort of the obvious are of the old. Those who take their stand as animals, even cheerful and intellectual animals, are of the old; but those who deny the animal are of the new. The egoist is of the old, the altruist of the new, the narrow family man and family woman are of the old, the one

who can extend his kinship is of the new; the merely national is of the old, the universal of the new. Those who hate, separate off, standardise human beings for commercial or military ends are of the old; those who love, join together, and delight in diversity are of the new. Those who stand on their human dignity are of the old; those who understand their spiritual dignity are of the new. Those who blame others or seek to exonerate themselves are of the old; those who take sins upon themselves are of the new. Those who wish the world to be controlled by justice are of the old; those who are ready to solve any legal count against them by love and sacrifice are of the new. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And out of all the new the invisible company of the Church is forming, coming into being, into a mutual consciousness; and I see the old receding and the new increasing, as it were morning light pouring into a night which has been partly of sleep and partly of troubled dreams and meditations.

Not that the old does not seem to return, and midnight darkness seem to threaten dawn. In

church one Sunday Dushan and I hear a preacher say: "When I was young I dwelt mostly in the New Testament, but the older I get the more do I return to the Old. And the time in which we live seems to be an Old Testament time. We are now two thousand five hundred years before Christ, in the reign of King Hezekiah." He did not understand the naïveté of the confession that for him it would be two thousand five hundred years before Christ was even born! "But that is nothing," says the Serb. "There are many who are much further back than Hezekiah, many who have not even reached the Old Testament. We must not despair if even the Pope himself were to preach that sermon. The Pope has said that the force of right should displace the force of might, and that the world quarrel should be settled on lines of equity and justice.[1] That is really an Old Testament utterance, though it has seemed too advanced for half Europe, even so. But we should not doubt that the real date is A. D. 1918 and not 2500 B. C."

"Why do you think the Pope is Old Testament?" I ask.

[1] Papal Note of August 1, 1917.

"Well," says Dushan, "the force of might, the ordinary force of the war, is barbarian, is it not? It is pre-Old Testament. Right came by Moses with the Commandments. That is Old Testament. But the only force that can solve problems to-day is that of love. Love is New Testament, and instead of equity and justice and condemnation and indemnity, and the like, there is *sacrifice*.

"Barbarian—might.

"Judaic—justice and right, condemnation, punishment.

"Christian—love, sacrifice, understanding, joy in diversity, forgiveness.

"But it is almost impossible for an organised body to regulate life in the Christian spirit. The fact of organisation drives Christian men and women back upon the seemingly more practical and simple basis of right and law and justice. That basis, however, has proved a failure and is an anachronism, as the uneasy Pope himself probably knows. Probably in his heart his passion is to reconcile the world through love, but backward humanity drags him back to 'right.' "

"The Socialists are full of faith, however," I

urge. "They are in full cry to save the world by a system of social *justice*."

"That will visibly fail," says Dushan. "The world can only be saved and made at one by social *sacrifice*."

"You do not think we are in a hopeless minority nursing this thought?"

"A minority, perhaps, but not hopeless. There are many moving, the whole world is moving, with Popes and priests and organisations and myriad-hearted humanity. Christ said that he who was not against Him was for Him. It is now nearly two thousand years later. Now He would say, He who is for Me is for Me, and he who is against Me will be for Me. Certain things have come to pass in two thousand years."

So Dushan and I, wandering among magistrates, preachers, and teachers seek those who are clearly "for" and have the new faith. And nowadays every one has become a magistrate and mounts the bench to pass judgment. But among magistrates as among teachers we find also the beginnings of the Kingdom which our faith bids us seek, and begin to find the unseen walls of the true Church.

And what we apply to human society around us we apply also to Europe at large and to the world. The nations are a school hitherto run on old-fashioned lines with endless condemnation and bitterness and strife and little learning. Now Europe itself might be a sort of Montessori school where the nations are the children. If that is too childish a conception, remember the Christ's saying about children—of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. A happy Europe would still be far from being the Kingdom, but it must be young Europe, unfinished Europe, Europe learning still, Europe on the way, not conceited, self-satisfied Europe, Europe enough unto itself. Yes, Europe as a perfect Montessori school—that is the inwardness of the League of Nations idea. Not a league to enforce peace, which is an illiberal idea, but a league to allow freedom and self-realisation and immunity from the condemnation of neighbours.

I am present at a meeting of professors and philosophers discussing social reconstruction after the War. All manner of precautions against war breaking out afresh are suggested, and it is curious that the whole solemn discussion gives way at the

end to a plea for better manners and a spirit of mutual tolerance and kindness. The best way to avert war is by understanding foreign nations and allowing their right to exist and develop to the self-realisation of man and the glory of God the Creator. The man who makes this plea has the faith of the new era, of the coming of the Kingdom.

We search among publicists and politicians for those who have this spirit of mutual tolerance and kindness, who do not cry, "God punish Germany, God punish England," and the like; for those who love any particular other race, who understand and can interpret, for those who write about foreign peoples positively, who are not ready to turn a penny by appealing to the traditional distrust of the foreigner but who can see and will tell of the bright though different life of the foreigner. And we find more than are expected by those who are pessimists regarding humanity—lovers of France, Russia, Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, America, Japan, China, Turkey. . . .

We seek also those who are ready to erase the colour bar. White man must love and understand black man, yellow man. Americans learn to be

good Europeans and not merely Americans when they rejoin Britain in her struggle. But America comes laden with the sadness of the plight of the black man, her ten millions of liberated slaves, many of whom will also have shed their blood and mingled it in death with the blood of whites for the same cause. She comes laden also with enmity toward the yellow man, and is predisposed to settle a dispute with Japan by the same anachronistic force of arms and appeal for justice and right. She will not readily give to Japan over and above what Japan wants in the West, and so win more goodwill in the grand commonwealth of humanity. But if America comes thus encumbered, we come to her not less so. We English have India on our conscience and the denial of the brotherhood of the most wonderful peoples of the East. India has mingled her blood with ours also on the field of death for the same ideals; it is for us to meet her now with love and sacrifice and the convincing reality of our religion. And in Africa it must no longer be possible to reproach us as King Cetewayo said: "First come missionary, then come rum, then come trader, then come soldiers"—nor

for the soldier to yearn to be shipped east of Suez that he may raise a thirst for sin.

Our civilising mission ought to have been to have won the coloured peoples, not to find means of basely using them or of enslaving them.

Russia brings the burden of the hate of the Jews. The Jews must be won also to Christ, as indeed we confidently know they will be won in time. There are still great numbers not of Jewish nationality who are Judaic in their religion, even whilst calling themselves Christian. They must all be won to Christ. Our Christian example is too faint. We meet the Jews on their own ground of law and right instead of in the spirit of sacrifice and love. In any case we must tolerate their Judaism and Jewish ways, and know and expect that as Christ arose from them two thousand years ago, so Christians can and must spring from them now and hereafter.

It was Christ who discovered for us that there was only one law—love—and that all other true laws, though seen as separate, were part of one and the same law. In science a similar discovery was made by the Russian Mendeléeff, namely, that there

was only one substance, and that all the elements, so definite in their separateness, were aspects of one and the same *substance,* that all the elements in Nature are related to one another in a grand design, and that put into that relationship in that design they make a unity. All the marvellous individuality of the elements can be accommodated in a higher collective unity. And that unity, when realised, covers all the diversity of the elements.

The time has come for the elements of humanity to realise the same. In a few living it is realised. Two things are needed: a love of the diversity and an understanding of the unity.

The excitement of the chemist in allocating the places of the elements in the one circle of the common substance may be imagined, the thrill with which true neighbours were understood as adjacent colours in the spectrum, the greater thrill caused by the blanks left by the ignorance of certain elements not yet discovered. The thrill of the seer is not less in gazing at the spectrum of humanity. To realise that the truism, It takes all sorts to make a world, is really true! That it takes all sorts not

merely here and now but about the eternal throne of God!

The idea of the last judgment as a roll-call goes, and we see instead a humanity all diverse and yet *one* before God. The shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine in the fold and goes out into the wilderness to seek the lost one is like the scientist seeking the undiscovered metal of the spectrum. Some very insignificant non-useful element is needed, and there is no complete peace or harmony till it be found. Every individuality is precious "in the vast and perfect plan," every minority counts. The word "judgment" is probably wrong. The *finale* of man's existence cannot be a judgment. On the other hand, can it be merely a *gloria*, a prolonged, indefinite, but infinitely sincere *alleluia?* The human mind stops short, recognising its own incapacity. We are blind and deaf and dumb as to the significance of the grand *finale* of history.

But the thought comes to me that that *finale*, whether it be *Last Judgment* or an ultimate *gloria* on the lips of all mankind, is not something afar off in time. It is something happening now—and

it always has been happening, always will be happening, all the time.

The spectrum of light shows an infinite blending of tints, polarised for our eyes in the seven primary colours, and there is a vision of Creation as just such a spectrum—the rainbow which comes about when the creative light of God's being shines through the one substance.

The spectrum of humanity, as the recording angel beholds it, shows an infinite blending of individuals polarised possibly for angelic as well as human eyes in races and nations, and as we all whirl before God we become the whiteness of the Church.

What then of space and time?

Has not infinite space, as we weakly call it, a spectrum which is an infinite series of places polarised in worlds and universes?

And time? Eternity?

The spectrum of eternity is the infinite blending of times which we understand as hours, days, eras, just as the spectrum of immortality must be our mortality, and of the infinite mind our minds, and of the Father's love our love.

Time is not a straight line or a river; it is a sphere and God is at the centre. He looks at past, present, and future at will. And mankind, as it was in error thinking the world flat, has been similarly in error thinking of time as something which is going on, some infinite straight line or river.

The whole Kingdom, in all its aspects, is changing, changing, blending, blending. There is movement encircling and involving lesser movement; there are greater movements still and greater, and that which is greater understands that which is less, but that which is less only vaguely apprehends that which is greater; greater and ever greater movements, diverse in plane and in direction. And yet I suppose the sum of all is absolute and motionless stability. God is at the centre in the *Eternal Now*, and as it were looks in the mirror, seeing I-am-that-I-am. That is the last judgment for ever going on.

"That is the greatest vision," says Dushan. "If we could see it all and see it clearly, and if we could all see it all the time, a universal consciousness of the highest would be realised. You do not see it clearly, I do not see it clearly. No individ-

ual or group can see it clearly or understand in fulness what it means. But perhaps all humanity reconciled and at one could see. The Argus-eyed body politic of all who are alive or dead could realise it."

"But where in all this is Christ? Where is the face that I seek?" I ask.

"Christ sees," he replies.

"I am losing sight of Christ. He is becoming too theoretical," say I.

"He is not theoretical," says Dushan. "He is the ideal side of our personality, of all men's personality. And that is the greatest reality of our life."

"It is real," say I. "But is that ideal side of you and me the same which sees the last judgment for ever going? Is he the Argus-eyed of whom you spoke?"

"The same."

"Who then was Jesus Christ who walked in Palestine, the actual historical figure?"

"He was the ideal side of our personality."

"If so, we have made a historical reality into an abstraction."

"Not in the least. All humanity is one physically, we are all out of Adam and Eve. All humanity, though less obviously, is also spiritually one. In all of us the physical side predominates and the spiritual is hidden. But Jesus Christ was the redeeming case. In Him the hidden side of our common spirituality was focussed. As a historical figure He was at the centre of the racial process. He was at the heart of corporate humanity, and in Him we see reflected our ideal personality. He reflects the ideal personality of all mankind visibly on the earth. From all points of the hidden and mysterious background of mankind lines were drawn to one point and the resultant came through to our material plane in Him. In Him the whole of our spiritual side blossomed and took features and form. No, no theory, I assure you: actual fact. That is how it was possible to say that as in Adam all die, so in Christ should all be made alive; when He appears we shall be like Him; I am the Vine, ye are the branches. . . . I am the Door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.

"Through Christ is the way to the spiritual unity which is at the background of us all. When you

realise that, then if you will you can exchange bodies and become me, or your neighbour in the street, or any one at will. You can exchange personality and being at will, and go in and out among humanity."

"The dead as well as the living?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And those who will be born."

"They are already alive in us. You can go backward or forward in time. So you become one with Christ and have the Face you seek for, you become the changing one yourself and the redeemer. Whenever you understand a fellow-man you redeem him. And you cannot understand him fully without understanding all."

THE IMMORTAL

Christ is the whole significance of our mortality. Were we not mortals we should not have Christ. If we did not die we should all remain separate individualities, persistent and selfish. But because we all die we can understand our unity—our being one flesh and one spirit. We can love. It is the look of mortality in the eyes that beckons to us to love one another. The immortals have clear, hard eyes and they cannot be loved. Their faces would be terrible to us if we could look upon them. Yet how men cling to the length of this life and see an absolute evil in mortality! To seek to be perpetuated as we are is the opposite of seeking Christ. He lives the best who is always ready to die.

II

THE IMMORTAL

THERE are possibly several mortals living, several men who though they were born thousands of years ago have never died. Not that their immortality is more real than ours. It is different, that is all. We pass through the gate of death, pass perhaps often through death on our long way. They simply never die. By now probably they have become invisible to ordinary human gaze, completely transparent, translucent, and it is in vain that pilgrims having the clue to their existence still seek them on the remote peaks of Hindu Kush. I have the story of Celeus, or Cilfa as he was called by another generation, who discovered the infinitely rare drug which alters the psychic state and liberates the partial human soul from the chain of death.

Cilfa obtained the secret from his aged father, who, as a result of a life-long task, had discovered the element of the elixir and also means of obtain-

ing the rarefied magnetic force without the application of which the drug is useless. Cilfa's father, the old sorcerer, was afraid of being perpetuated as a half-blind tottering hunchback with one foot eternally in the grave, and perhaps experience had given him strange wisdom. He bequeathed the elixir to his son, bidding him think well before he applied it. There was only enough for one person, and possibly the whole world did not contain sufficient to make a second dose. So the aged father bade him imagine his loneliness, the danger of humanity finding him out and imprisoning him from generation to generation, perhaps for ever.

But Cilfa had no doubts. It appealed to him as the most wonderful adventure—to live for ever. Once he had been under sentence of death and had stood bound in front of an executioner, and he knew what it was to face parting with sweet life, the anguish of it. And then when reprieve had come he had remembered that all the same a day of death had to come to him sometime. So he accepted the elixir. Only he determined to keep it a secret; the rest of humanity must not know.

For if they did a great deal of the zest would be gone. He would become the richest and wisest man in the world. No one should know his age. But when the records showed him inconveniently old he would go to another clime with a great amount of wealth and start again as a nobody. And so on—for an eternity in a straight line. It was maddeningly thrilling.

Lest he should lose his mental balance in his excitement, he decided to take the potion at once. He did so. But not a moment too soon. For as he held the fatal glass distraction was already in his eyes, his brain reeled, and his hand went to and fro like a branch in the wind. Even his lips refused at first to open, and when he by luck, as it were, got the vessel to his mouth and drank the few drops, he bit and broke the glass. But then at once a great relief: 'twas done, 'twas not missed, he was immortal, he would never die. He lay down at once and slept.

When Cilfa awoke, he at once remembered that he had taken the elixir, but he had an uneasy feeling that he had slept a thousand years, the light

about him seemed new and everything seemed to have altered. It was with a great deal of relief that he realised that he could not have been asleep more than an hour and that he had lost very little of eternity. His father's funeral was going past and he heard the wailing of those people he had paid to mourn. It was the same world as a moment before: the only difference was he had become immortal.

So he sat down and began to think of life. He thought of his grudges and was consumed with mirth at the thought of his secret superiority to his enemies. He thought of a certain man who had him in his power, Balbo, whom he had feared for ten years. He thought of many pleasant acquaintances and their friendly rivalry, and he thought of a woman whose favour he had been mad to have—of whose true lover he had been mortally jealous, but he did not think long of them.

"Was my father right?" he asked himself. "Was he right in thinking he would have been perpetuated in the form of an old man? Would he not have returned to his prime?"

Cilfa considered himself. Nothing seemed to

have changed. He was forty. It was rather staggering to think that at forty thousand he would look the same—a little grey, a little tired about the eyes, pallid, weak at the knees and rather easily tired.

Whether it was the draught of immortality or the nervous stimulus of a new idea, Cilfa felt less predisposed to tiredness, felt in fact a certain alacrity and energy in his body. He decided to visit Yooxa, though he did not want her so much now that he was immortal.

"In order to love a woman well, one ought to remain eternally at twenty-five," Cilfa reflected. "A woman never forgives a man being less than his prime."

But he was in no way mortified by the thought. He walked along the Olive way to the familiar domain associated with so many heartburnings. And the little olive leaves were dropping yellow and red. All Nature was turning towards death, and though Cilfa had little poetry in his soul, it touched him now to think that everything else went inexorably on toward death but he remained changeless.

He took to Yooxa a gold ornament, a gift she had already scornfully refused, and he brought it again.

He came to her bower and she bade him wait. Her true lover held her in his arms and she told him who it was had come. And they laughed together and let him wait. "Let him wait," said Yooxa.

So Cilfa waited. For, as he reflected, he had plenty of time. He waited so patiently that at last Yooxa was enraged. She flung out to him in a fury, and, seizing the proffered ornament from his hand, dashed it on his brow.

Cilfa felt no pain. It was as if a leaf had struck him. And he did not care for Yooxa.

He stood facing her, smiling, and asked gently when she would have leisure.

And Yooxa, in astonishment, fled within. Cilfa had never treated her in this way before.

He went now toward the city and the merchants. He had decided to give up his old life of hunting and farming and to become a man of gold. He decided to sell his patrimony and open money-changing tables. With money-changing as a

foundation he would become a secret moneylender, first on a small scale, and later on a large scale. His wealth would become fabulous but his actual resources he would keep secret, and certainly in course of time they must be even greater than any silly fable or legend would suggest. He would buy men; some female slaves, some military captives. But that would be awkward: he could not have thousands of slaves. Such property would be too obvious and cumbrous. He would buy the opinions and actions of important men. The Grand Vizier would need perhaps ten thousand pieces of gold to change his opinion when the Sultan consulted him. He had better become Vizier himself in time. And then Sultan.

With this in view he bought a little kiosk for changing money, and the alien foreigners who sat at the other tables laughed among themselves to see a hunter and farmer think of breaking in upon their business.

It was now six hours since Cilfa had taken the elixir, and as he thought he ought to feel hungry he repaired to a tavern and ordered a large meal. When it appeared he ate a very little and felt com-

pletely sated, could not touch anything more.

So he turned once more into the city and chose the house he would live in in fifty years' time, and then a much larger for a hundred years. "I shall be one hundred and forty years old but may perhaps pretend to be eighty and wear a grey wig," thought he to himself. "At one hundred and forty I ought to be rich enough to be buying large souls. But probably I had better not begin in this city. I ought to arrange for my death and disappearance, and then appear in another city without wig and with a new name and a very considerable quantity of gold."

He began to think out the luxury of the house that he would buy fifty years hence, its silks and carpets, its beds and canopies, the elegance of his servants, the beauty of his wives. Then a malicious thought seized him—the idea of buying Yooxa. With untold wealth he could no doubt contrive to get any woman into his power. The problem of buying Yooxa would be comparatively simple if he had enough money. But of course in fifty years she would be sixty-seven. So that was really out of the question, and he did not care for

her much now as it was. Having immortality, how could he possibly concern himself long with the grace of a puny, wasting girl!

His steps now bore him to the district of the scholars and disputers, where was always endless wrangling over ideas. Never had Cilfa dreamed of taking a part there. Hunter and farmer were too stupid occupations to qualify him to say a word in this arena. But he was tickled now with the idea that he could silence every one of them, if not in one moment, at least in course of time. So he went up to a noisy throng and interrupted the disputers, and claimed to say his word.

One in the crowd recognised Cilfa and told the others it was a farmer, and with much mirth they let him climb to the speaker's eminence to make a speech. All expected a long and monstrously foolish speech, and were ready to pull him down or pull the boards from under him when he exceeded their patience.

Cilfa stood in front of them like a statue and said not a word.

The disputers became silent, and then violently impatient,

"Time is precious to them," thought Cilfa maliciously.

"Pull the fool down," said some one. And then Cilfa raised his hand and, smiling, gently uttered his speech—only four words—and then bowed solemnly and descended.

"All men are fools," said Cilfa, and bowed, and that was all.

There was silence for a moment, and it almost seemed as if the hunter had made an impression. But some one suddenly whispered the joke, "He knows, he knows," and every one laughed at him.

But Cilfa reflected to himself, I shall come back regularly and say it for the next hundred years. By then my victory will have come.

"It would be good to become wise," thought Cilfa. "I am too stupid to become so in an ordinary lifetime, but I'm young enough in eternity to begin. I ought to learn all there is to know. I could learn every important book by heart. Mortal humanity throughout all time might be my slaves, working just for me."

And he returned to his home to rest, did so mechanically from long habit, just because the hour

was late. But he had no need to rest, and though he lay down to sleep he only slept half an hour. The next night following he only slept a quarter of an hour. The night following that, seven minutes and thirty seconds or thereabouts. On the eighth night he slept twelve seconds, and a week later still all the sleep he needed was one-tenth of a second. So there was no doubt about it, the elixir had begun to work in some way and was likely to be genuine. Cilfa had infinite faith in his old father's research and never doubted his immortality.

What happened with regard to his sleep found a counterpart in his appetite. It rapidly decreased, and it was soon evident that he had extremely little need of food. He did not get tired and he did not get hungry. He did not suffer from indigestion or liver, and was indeed aware of a steady constitutional change for the better.

He sold his farm and his estate and became a townsman. The swarthy aliens who did the money business did not laugh at him long, for he was remarkably successful as a money-changer. He was unusually sharp and perspicacious, and developed what is called a firm upper lip and a strong

chin. He had a growing hard contempt for his fellow-beings, and brow-beat them in all transactions with them. Whenever he met a man, even were he the cunningest or hardest of the town, Cilfa would be the harder, and the other would be conscious of a sort of ineffectiveness, a furtiveness, an inability to look facts in the face. But Cilfa would say what he meant and intended forthwith, and would win.

Cilfa's old friends of the hunt looked a little askance at him, but he had many new friends who flattered and wondered, and stood by to be helped by him.

And Yooxa, who had despised him, came round in her views, and he did not need to compass the possession of her by bribery. She came to him, and after some little show of playfulness came into his household and was his wife. Cilfa doubtless had become finer in appearance as a result of his perfect health, and when Yooxa came to him he began to consider his personal appearance, which had certainly changed. His brow, which had been lined and not very good in tint, fleshy in parts, grey in parts, was now smooth and white and massive,

the brow of a man against whom it would be difficult to prevail. His eyes were larger and clearer; his lips tended to be set as if carved; his body was a little sparer and more supple. The grey hairs from his head were disappearing, and the only change that went against his appearance was a sort of moulting of his moustache and beard—these seemed to become thinner every day.

Yooxa came in, and he had the same triumph over her that he had daily over the poor mortal money-grubbers of the market who strove against him. He had her furnished fittingly with a boudoir of all softness and luxury, and put slaves at her disposal; slaves also to watch her, for he intended to keep her his prisoner, even though she might tire of him and wish to run away. He would have been content to share immortality with her in order to keep her eternally prisoner, though he had no manner of love for her.

He could not eat with her for the good reason he had practically ceased eating, and though he could share her couch he could never sleep with her, must remain sleepless at her side. Neither could he have much interest in her doubts and

frets and anxieties and piques, for he would live for ever, and in the light of immortality such things were absurd.

He came to Yooxa on his first nuptial night with this thought in his heart: "I have outlived your scorn"; and his second thought was more malicious and even cruel. It might be put in these words: "An immortal is coming to you and will ruin you."

The question might be asked, and it did present itself to his mind: "What sort of a child would an immortal beget in a mortal woman?" The question gave him pause, for he might beget a troublesome son who would rival him in immortality, and then perhaps a daughter, and lay the foundation of a whole race of immortals which would rob him of his isolated glory. But the cruel thought alone remained in power that in bearing such a child the mortal woman must be broken. His revenge in marriage would be his secret, terrible personality.

And when with this thought he came into the presence of Yooxa she was smitten by a terror of him, as is a little bird when the eyes of the eagle are upon it. And the great strong Cilfa, with his

infinite reserve and resource, bent his eyes upon his little white prey, and as he came toward her he thought interiorly: Behold how eternity will revenge itself on time. Then he stopped.

'Tis true one speck of lust remained in him, one speck, that is all. And now for the first time a sort of horror possessed his mind. For he had not realised till that moment that as his need for sleep and food had passed, so also had passed the third great human appetite, the desire and need of the flesh. His attitude toward Yooxa was only an intellectual thirst for revenge, and in his idea of possessing her he had only been pursuing mechanically the course of thought which had been his before taking the elixir.

So Cilfa left the bridal chamber and resolved to give himself the more to the greater task of grasping human power.

Weeks and months passed, and he grew rich so rapidly that he would have been able to enjoy great wealth even in his normal lifetime had he remained an ordinary mortal. But it must be remembered that without the hard faith which a sense of immortality gave him it is unlikely that he would

have done so well. He began to have it in his power to affect the course of State affairs, and was able to make a beginning at purchasing the words and actions of politicians. His zest for money-making palled a little, but the buying of souls flattered a boundless intellectual pride which had grown up in him. He gloated on the spectacle of the most powerful and wisest of mortals transformed into puppets which he worked on hidden wires.

He had become a sufficiently remarkable man by now, and it needed all his care to keep in the background. It was always said, and with perfect truth, that he hated publicity, and even when he heard his age understated by twenty years it caused him some mental anxiety. For it was not well that his age should be considered at all.

One day he absolutely checkmated a scheme of a clever young nobleman of about eighteen years. The latter was exceedingly mortified, but looked at him and smiled:

"I have plenty of time in front of me," he said. "My turn will come."

And on the anniversary of that day the young

man sent him a token with the repeated words, "My turn will come," and went on doing that each year with annoying regularity.

Cilfa, however, showed no sign of age. The hair on his head was short and black, and though it never grew it did not fall out. The nails on his hands did not grow. His forehead had become somewhat dome-shaped. His eyes were large and blank, and from the lower eyelids and the cheek-bones the skin was pure and strong. His beard and moustache had completely fallen away. His lips and teeth and tongue had modified, as their need was only to aid speech. His ears were decidedly finer. His body was changed in tone, for everything gross had departed from it. On his chest breasts had grown, but they were rather the breasts of Athene than of Aphrodite, and were marvellously pure, rising in a sweeping curve to the proud column of his neck. But his belly was curved inward and his thighs and legs seemed somewhat rudimentary.

For twenty years he sweated something out of his system every day. If he lay on a bed for a few hours, a reddish grey deposit could be collected

from the sheets. Something was continually dropping away from him, and that was no doubt the substance of our mortality.

At last he was forced to become a recluse, and wear a grey wig, and walk with a stick in order to keep his secret of immortality, and he constantly hoped for the death of the young man (now middle aged) who sent him the annoying message that his turn would come. For the young man had also done well in life, was well married, and had real power. So Cilfa, who could well afford to await his death, did wait; but though mortals must die, they sometimes take an unconscionable long time about it.

Indeed when he was one hundred and ten Cilfa was obliged to quit the field. He hid 200,000 pieces of gold in a distant though accessible cave, and, casting aside his wig and his stick, he disguised himself as a youth starting out on life with a small bundle on his back to seek his fortune.

And in this way he passed out of his Sultan's dominions into the dominion of an alien Sultan whose capital was fifty days' journey from the capital of the other. And there he determined to

have war waged on his native land, and if possible to get his enemy into his power.

He arrayed himself fittingly, and brought in the great treasure, and established himself as a prince of foreign lineage; indeed he made such a show that the Sultan was ready to see him married into his household, and he pressed a princess upon him for a wife, though, as may be imagined, after Yooxa, Cilfa wanted no more experience of married happiness.

Hardly, however, were the nuptials solemnised before he had managed to stir up cause for strife with his old country. And he went out with hosts to fight, determining with all the power of his immortality to take his enemy prisoner, and to look him in the face on the next anniversary and ask him maliciously did he think his turn would ever come.

But Cilfa greatly miscalculated the chances of the day. His old country won, and instead of his capturing his enemy he was slain by him—slain, but not killed.

In this wise: he sought him out in the field, and though he had little skill of arms, he reckoned

that as he could not be killed he would also be invulnerable and must win. He received several cuts from lesser foes, but even the deepest seemed to turn to scratches and gave him no pain. So he engaged to face the brilliant warrior who had thwarted him so long, and in order to terrify him he called out to him in familiar language, "Your turn at last," and let him know who he was. But his enemy struck at him valiantly, and with his whirling strokes deprived Cilfa of both arms. The immortal thus stood helpless, his arms lying on the field of battle. He felt no pain, but he felt a great deal of surprise and some anxiety. His enemy had fetters put on his feet, transferred him to a great train of slaves, and then continued the battle.

Then Cilfa's shoulders began to ache, and for three hours gave him unpleasant growing-pains. Night came, and the pains were transferred to his elbows, and then along his forearms to his wrists, and then to his fingers. He put forth his limbs, they were entire. The arms had grown on again. And he undid his fetters and escaped.

He escaped completely from the battle, and did

not return to the Sultan and his new bride, but, seriously disillusioned, began to wander aimlessly as a poor man and muse on life. Money and power were a failure, sensual delights were not for him, revenge was neither satisfying nor certain. Although he was immortal there were dangers. He might be captured and tortured. He would not feel the torture, but continual growing-pains would be trying. He might be burned at the stake if he fell into his enemy's hands.

Cilfa made a fire and put his hand in it to see what the effect would be. He would not burn. The heat was not pleasant, but his body had now become indestructible by fire. Undoubtedly his father had been right in his forecast of danger. If humanity found out his secret he would be simply imprisoned for life, and orders would be given from generation to generation that he was a human monster and must be carefully guarded. He might thus be sealed up for a thousand years. It would not be long but it would be tedious. He would be like the genie in the fisherman's haul of lead, and the genie was sufficiently athirst to be free from his imprisonment.

He decided to live an ordinary life for a while, and be as human as possible, and be taken for an ordinary fellow-human. "One never knows whom one jostles in the street," he once heard a man say. "Quite true," he thought, "it is amusing that it never occurs to any man I meet that he is talking to an immortal."

But life was unspeakably dull. None of the ordinary occupations taken so seriously by himself in the past appeared as more than a game, and a tedious game at that. Even learning and wisdom failed to be worth while, since all the learning and wisdom in the world could not be put into the scale against his immortality. He no longer envied any one any kind of success. What he did envy was the power to be interested and get excited, the power not to despise ordinary human interest. "I believe I would cut down my immortality to 10,000 years," he said, "if only I could be simply human all the time." A vain thought. There were even times when he doubted the practical wisdom of having taken the elixir. He now mingled more and more with humanity, preferring a gregarious life to his former seclusion, and pretended to be inter-

ested in the world and the flesh. It was his lot to live with a man who committed suicide, a student who banished Hamlet's doubts from his mind, deciding that "not to be" was better than "to be." The student put down the half-finished glass of poison and died. And Cilfa came and looked at him and at the glass. The event reminded him mournfully of the day when he took the elixir. He picked up the glass of poison and tasted it, but it made no more impression on him than a drop of water falling on his head. He would fain have followed the student and been "quit of it all."

Cilfa had always been a materialist. The old sorcerer, his father, had not believed in gods, and Cilfa had been brought up without religion. His temperament was such that he thrived on godlessness. And in the wisdom gained by three lifetimes' experience he had come to associate all gods and religiousness and prayers with mortality, it was all part of being doomed to die. If he could get on without gods as a mortal, certainly he found no need of them as an immortal. Indeed, one of the dangers inherent in the eternity of his immortality was that some day some tribe would discover

his secret and force him to be their god. And he realised it was in his power to be a far more satisfactory god than most of the gods which men in one part or another of the world professed. The only god that he found as great as himself was the God of the Israelites. And once he addressed himself to the blank heavens in these words: "If You exist, then You and I are immortal. Come out of the sky and let us embrace." But no answer came, and he concluded that if such a God existed He might be greater than he, might be, in fact, omnipotent. And he considered the subject of God with his intellect, which had now grown to be very mighty. He even framed a set of words as a prayer to his God, a reasonable prayer, a prayer which had none of the character of human prayer, none of the feeling, the anguish.

But Cilfa prayed in his way, which was a just way according to many standards. He prayed at last that his immortality might be taken away and he might have the grace to die. He went up into the mountains, and kneeled, and struck his mighty brow on the rocks, and with all the might of his intellect and will he said to God, "Decree my

death." He said it once—it was the most terrible moment of his life.

But Cilfa did not realise that he was not completely enfranchised yet. He was still dropping mortality from him, still changing. Every cell of his flesh was being created anew of a new substance, his organs were all slowly modifying, and his psychism was purging itself still under the influence of the elixir and striving to affirm the absolute. His prayer was part of the sickness of a perpetual moult. He arose from the rocks purer, harder, more terrible, less compromised than ever. His mind grew stronger. It was difficult for him to explain how it was he had been so strongly interested in power at one time. But now his interests grew more rarefied if more certain. The desire to be among humanity began to recede, and with it all human care whatsoever. His face became so preoccupied that there was some danger of his being thought possessed of a devil and put in durance. But his wanderings were not among men. He went into the wilderness, crossed the most desolate mountain ranges, walked all day, all night, in whirling snowstorms, never experienc-

ing any tiredness, or pain of cold or heat, or any hunger. He went to the Pole; he went to the Equator. He was indeed

> imprison'd in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> This pendent world.

He went to the heart of the great African desert and was buried in the sand and struggled out again; he went to the bottom of the sea and along it and did not drown. He jumped the greatest precipices and did not hurt himself; he went into the craters of volcanoes and did not burn. All to no avail. He tried another dull lifetime among men at a lascivious court; he tried another as a scholar and a wise man; he wrote books and proved the truth that of the writing of them there is no end.

He was already much older than Methuselah when we lose sight of him; and that was some thousands of years ago, though he must be living somewhere, somehow, now. He decided that he would muse a thousand years on his fate, sitting on the same spot, untroubled by his fellow-men, not troubling them. With that in view he went

to India and commenced to climb the Himalayas. Of these great mountains he sought the highest and most inaccessible, presumably Mount Everest, and after indescribable difficulty and effort he got through the snow even to the topmost summit. In the clear weather he saw that he was at the supremest height, so he carefully cut a throne in the snow and crossed his legs and sat there; and when night came he chose a point in the heavens and fixed his gaze upon it, and did not depart from that point by day. Thus he began to muse for a thousand years.

It is correct to say that not one single ordinary human thought traversed his brain. Indeed, there is nothing that we can get down into ordinary human language unless it is one word, the first and the last.

Cilfa settled himself to think for a millennium. He was at perfect ease. He looked at the point decided upon and he thought with a strange breath, "I . . ."

The rest is lost, was not audible here. Cilfa bending his eyes on one point is therefore lost in an eternal "I." He sat there unmoving a lunar

month, a year, a decade, a century, centuries, and all the while he changed toward the absolute. Still his body modified itself, and the cells of his flesh, and the composition of his soul—just in the same way that his intellect slid on to a new plane incomprehensible to us except for the vanishing word "I"—so his body became more and more remote in type, lost its palpability, lost its opaqueness, till at last it became transparent and the sun shone through it as through glass—then completely invisible.

At that point I lose sight of him myself. And whether he is still at the top of Mount Everest, or came down after his thousand years and walks again disguised among us, I cannot say. The last real thing I report of him is the word "I." For us poor mortals the last word would always be *We*, but for the immortal it was *I*.

THE CHANGELESS GOD

Our God is the God of change. It is therefore that mortality is sweet and all our living is mortality. An infinite tenderness is diffused through the world through the pathos of change. Only the changeless is terrible.

III

THE CHANGELESS GOD

The sun rose and set, the seasons changed. Flowers blossomed and faded, children were born and grew. Winds blew, rains fell, colours passed over the land. Messages arrived from far away, and messages were sent. Men and animals moved to and fro upon the earth, obeying and commanding. Every night bright stars shone in the sky above all clouds and a fair moon rose and swam across the heavens.

There was One greater than all of us, than sun and moon and child and flower and wind and rain and earth and star. We all depended on one another, and watched one another like slaves and masters, but there was one Over-Master at whose will all moved. He was called God. We knew no other God.

Our prayers steamed up to that God; prayers that were thoughts, prayers that were songs, pray-

ers that were deeds, prayers that were joy. There was the sunrise prayer of red and silver, the sunset prayer of red and gold, the deep meditation of the night. There was the interchange of command, of message, of glance, the interchange of smile. The breath of power whereby that God kept us together in a unity with Him passed through our secret veins, and ascended and vivified us all. We had our histories of lives and changes; the little things had little histories, the sun had its great history, and the great God behind us all—He knew. We had our notions of time, the sun had its notion of time; we counted time from a hypothetical beginning, and said it was an illusion. For God it was no illusion. He knew what the Time was.

One day the Great One looked down upon the beautiful earth, upon a rose garden where a child played. It was a slender, delicate girl. She was so slender and delicate that her existence heightened the glory of God's grand design. The workings of the universe were so diverse that they gave welcome even to the finest, the strangest, and the rarest. It was joy to the strength of God that it could handle and use the subtle shades of being. He lay

at length therefore in the morning of His great day when our little morning was passing His. The sun shone brightly and hotly over the white stone walls of the garden. A gentle breeze wandered among the rose trees, and the blossoms nodded and bowed to one another. The many bees and flies buzzed back and forward as if making netting of the air. White and brown butterflies flitted to and fro, sometimes settling on a flower, sometimes alighting on the paths, opening and shutting their wings to the sky. Day moths on poised wings shot out long tongues into the honeyed depths of flowers. Helena, the girl, sat upon a grass plot and ran her fingers through her golden hair. She sat, thoughtless, looking upon beauty, undisturbed.

The great Eye was pleased to look down, and recognise, though printed small, the messages He had long since entrusted to forerunners, to the sun and the stars and the winds. He was glad to see in what little ways the garden bore His marks upon it. There was not a line or an angle or a curve that was not a letter of His own writing. The lines of the bee's flight in the air, the bend of the rose-tree stems, the lines of the form of the girl

were the same as He had intended from the first. The patterns of their tracery were framed in His supernal dwelling. No other God could ever dispute His claim to His beautiful universe. So He looked upon the garden and loved it. And the garden looked upon Him and grew more beautiful. What time that might be in Universal Time by which the Gods count, no mortal knows. But it was upon a day, and even a day counts in Eternity. It was the day of the weakness of that God.

The God became enamoured of the garden, the garden became enamoured of the God. The bees and flies buzzed more fast, the sun shone more intensely, the white walls gleamed, the roses trembled in the air. The roses became motionless as if enchanted.. Helena ceased to wave her fingers in her tresses. She gazed. The God moved towards the garden, and the garden moved towards the God. So His Throne was left empty and unguarded.

The girl gazed into a transcendent beauty; her lips parted with wonder which even her being had never divined, her cheeks crimsoned, her breast moved forward. For the swarm of flies and bees had for her lost their distinctive form, and had been

inbreathed by some power of Beauty that held them as one, as the magical dreadful brows and hair of the God; and the enchanted roses had faded to a shadowy Face, to which in a moment the sun, shining through, added an all-sparkling lustre. The girl stood up: the roses had gone; at her breast were all the roses.

Nearer and nearer came the garden to the God, and more awful became the garden. Helena rose with outstretched arms, with parted lips, with eyes too wide, with a breast and soul that gave itself away. . . .

She moved forward and cried and fell . . . and then, as it were, she ceased to exist.

All things for a moment ceased to exist, and fell from the grasp of the God. The sun fell out. The stars stepped inside the sky, the moon effaced itself and disappeared. The earth beneath our feet, the garden, the walls and walks and lawn, the trees and flies and bees changed to invisible vapour and vanished. And Helena herself shrank within the compass of her inmost cell, and opened the door which is inside of that, and disappeared.

A moment later all things reappeared and passed

back into existence. The sun came back, and under cover of its light the moon and stars and the world returned, and the garden with its walls and the girl. But they did not return the same as they had been, but rather as if owing a new allegiance, as an estate and slaves that had changed masters. They had returned at the bidding of a different God, at the bidding of a Changeless God, and they became bound in an iron obedience beneath His throne.

There was a different world under the different dominion. The sun no longer rose and set, the seasons changed not, the blossoms and the children and men remained as they were, and moved not, and grew not. No wind blew or rain fell, nor passed the colour over the land. No messages were received, none sent, but all lay preserved and fixed and silent as if modelled in marble. One decree, once uttered, held all the worlds together. The light of the sun moved not into the earth. It was fixed like an unmoving bridge. The prayers that went up to God reached Him but were not received. They extended from earth to heaven like a bridge, like the frozen gleams of the sun's light.

The night meditated not. The lodestone held captive, but attracted not. And Helena looked up out of eyes that had been widened by strain—looked up with ceaseless adoration at the Changeless God. The Universe which had changed masters was the universe of her soul.

THE LIGHT

Our Western civilisation is unconvincing as an expression of Christianity. We send our missionaries from London and New York to the East to preach Jesus. But if the Eastern is moved by the Word and seeks us in our own clamorous homes, how great is his disillusion! Jesus is in our midst, but He is difficult to find except among the despised and rejected.

IV

THE LIGHT

EACH of us has his own particular Kingdom of Heaven, for the Word of God grows differently in each heart where it is planted. Missionaries and broadcast sowers of the seed take little thought of this—they reckon on a certain uniformity of effect. If the heathen becomes baptized or verbally confesses Christ, they are fairly satisfied and pass on. It is not theirs to search the earth, and watch and note the wonderful ways of God. Perhaps they would deny that whenever the idea of Christianity actually reached a man's heart he would be likely to start up and do something unusual.

A Turk once received the Word by chance into his very heart. The sower was an American Baptist missionary who, one sultry afternoon, overtook the Turk riding with attendants and camels to his home settlement just outside a large Turkish city. The American hastened to make him a pres-

ent of a translation of the Gospel. The Moslem received the present with great courtesy according to the ways of his nation; and in return, for it is considered impolite not to exchange, he gave him a present of a little seal. The American then explained that he was obeying the command of his Master, that he go into all the world and carry the Light to those who were in darkness. The Turk thought the American very noble; he surmised that the religion which would make a man go so many miles to present a little book to a stranger on the road must be something worth knowing and understanding, perhaps worth embracing even. The Turk was not unready to embrace a new religion, for he belonged to the New Turkey that turns yearningly, if impractically, to the West.

The American allowed himself to feel a glow of pride in his religion and the romance of the mission-field. Then he said good-bye, hoped the Turk would be brought to the Light, and went on to the city. The Turk promised to read the Gospel and try and find the Light.

As soon as the Turk got home he sat down to study the little book. It was a translation of the

Gospel of St. John, and he read, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and on through all those wonderful pages of the most beautiful history in the world.

Not through all.

Before he was half-way through the Gospel, the Turk put down the book and went out of his chamber, crying, "Where is the man who hath given me this wonderful doctrine? Surely he of all men is the one it would be well to know and honour."

They told him that the missionary was by that time in the city, and they saddled three swift horses, and the Turk with two servants set off to bring the American back. They brought the missionary to the settlement once more, and to the mansion among the shady cypress trees by the side of the wide river, and they would have done him much honour.

"Tell me," said the Turk, "do you have the light of which the book doth tell?"

"I have it," said the Baptist. "I carry it into distant lands. I have to-day brought it to you."

"But do you live according to the beautiful wise words I have read? Are there many like you? Where do you live?"

"I am an American. In America we are Christians."

"How far away is America?"

"Five thousand miles, I guess."

"And America is founded on the Gospel?"

"America is the land of freedom. We are the refuge of the oppressed of all nations. To us come the Jews, the Russians, the Poles, the Germans, the Irish. We give them new life. I should say if any country is Christian, America is that country. As our President Lincoln said, 'We are the hope of the world and of all peoples.' "

The Moslem opened his gentle eyes and believed; he loaded the American with honours and thanks, and escorted him back once more to the city. Then he returned home and sat down in earnest to St. John's Gospel and mastered it, or rather tried to master it, for that extraordinary document has baffled the wisest and most scholarly as well as the simplest and most illiterate. The Turk learned English, a smattering of the tongue

that was spoken by the nation who based their worldly life on the Gospel of St. John. He found out the cost of a steerage passage. He took all his possessions and made them into lots and sold them, and sped away, following the setting sun, a-searching for the light that never was on sea or land.

His emotions on Columbus' journey may be imagined, his suspense when the ship stood still at last off Long Island at the quarantine dock, his stilled, homeful bosom expecting in the immediate future the vision of the New Jerusalem. When he saw the green, sun-glorified statue of Liberty in the harbour the tears rolled down his cheeks, and he cried out excitedly in his own language, astonishing the stolid emigrants wedged around him in the crush gazing at the statue and New York.

At Ellis Island, where all the steerage people are medically, financially, and inquisitorially examined, in the imbroglio of inspection might have been heard the following conversation:

"What is your profession?"

"What do I profess?"

"Yes, go on."

"I profess to be a servant of Jesus."

"I don't mean that. Wha' yer going to do here?"

"Do? I've come to find the Light."

"He's batty. Look here, Turko, wha's yer jahb?"

"In Turkey—farmer."

"Your ticket's to New York. Do you want to book out to the country?"

"No, I'm going into the city."

"You won't farm any in New York. How much money yer got? He's got four hundred dollars. You can go. Next!"

So Turko was made free of the American strand, and was landed at the Battery and driven in a rickety horse-cab to the Turkish and Syrian quarter on Tenth Avenue, and charged three dollars by the Christian cabman. His fellow-countrymen tried to put him right about America. They gave him a second-hand bowler hat, and made him exchange his vast, loose trousers for tight ones that avoided the shame of looking home-made. They could not, however, give him the corresponding conception of American Christianity. The Turk had faith in the Baptist missionary, and he had more faith still in

the Gospel of St. John. He used to say that since St. John had made a Christian of him it must have made Christians of thousands of others. He disbelieved in the outward semblances of New York. At a fashionable Fifth Avenue church they turned him out as an undesirable worshipper. His friends laughed. "That's the sort of Christians they are," said they.

"They are not Christians at all," said the Turk. "If their Lord and Master came to them dressed as a carpenter they'd turned Him away just as they did me."

Turko did not mind. He wandered from church to church over the vast metropolis, and whenever any one questioned him at a church door, he told them he was seeking the Light. But he felt there were very few Christians about. At a mission-hall Sunday school, where a lay preacher gave a long address on the feeding of the five thousand, pointing out how wonderful it was that five loaves and two small fishes could be made to go so far, the Turk got up and rather bewildered both pupils and teacher by saying that he thought the greatness of the miracle lay not in the fact that the loaves and

fishes sufficed, but in that five thousand were found ready to partake of them. The Gospel of St. John was just such a meal of loaves and fishes, but where were the five thousand who would eat of it and be filled?

At last, one night, wandering through China-town, the gentle Eastern came upon a shop whose window was painted black; a little dingy place that might one time have been a Jewish cobbler's or a little candy store. On the window was printed in white letters—

Have you found the Light?
Come in.

He tried the door, but it was locked; he looked through a scratch in the glass and saw a row of forms and seats in an empty room. What did it mean?

Incurious Chinamen in blue slops and pigtails wandered to and fro between their mysterious wash-shops, restaurants, and cellars. A vigilant policeman stood on the corner. The Turk looked round for some one to interrogate, and as he stood hesitating whether to go to the policeman or no,

a waxen-faced man, lean, out-at-elbows, stooping and staring, came staggering past him.

"Why isn't this open?" asked the Turk.

The opium-eater stopped.

"Wha's that?"

"Why is this place shut? It says 'Come in,' and it's shut."

"Wait a minute," said the opium-eater. "Now what is it? Whom do you want? Mary, is it, or the old feller? Gone home . . . you find them . . . Division Street. Say, you're all ri', I guess; take me 'long, take m'arm, C'lumbia Stree', next Dave's pool parlour."

The Turk took his arm.

"D'you know what I am? I'm what they call a dope-fiend. Say, that's a nys name fer a man, hey? Say baws, ye know the way, I s'pose. You wouldn't think it, but I'm in a God-damn hurry."

"Why do you say 'God-damn'?" said the Turk. "I thought you belonged in there. Haven't you ever come there when it was open and gone in?"

"Wha's that? Stop a minute. . . . Lemme see. Yes, that's ri'. You b'long to that bunch; well s'do I. I don' remember ye."

"What do they give you there?" asked the Turk. "You don't smell of whisky, how is it you get like this?"

"Tha's the dope. Hold on. You wan' Mary. Tha's ri', isn' it? She lives on Division Street, saintly 'ooman."

At length they reached Columbia Street.

"Yes, I'm more'n hurry than you'd think. Thanks, pardner. Come f'r me to-morrow at seven. I'll take ye to Mary. She'll be real pleased to see you. I'm in a hurry to get to sleep, b'gosh. . . ."

Next night at seven the Turk called for the opium-eater and they went along to Mary's mission-room. There the dope-fiend was well known. He had been saved there by Mary's father, and though he might be a backslider morally, yet he had become a believer, and had washed in the fountain. In the old man's words, he had got a firm grasp of eternity and would never let go.

There were four people in the room besides Mary and her father, a drunken street-woman who thought she was in the police-station, an ecstatic old

man who prayed independently and audibly, shouting every now and then:

> "Hallelujah! 'tis done!
> I believe on the Son;
> I am saved by the blood of the Crucified One,"

and there were the dope-fiend and Turko.

There was a sweet little service, and the two friends sang a duet together, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," Mary accompanying them on the hand-organ. The old father prayed for those in that room that night, and also, thoughtfully, for all those outside. Might they be brought to the Light! The light shone in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. Make the darkness comprehend! The preacher was illiterate, but he was simple and gentle. Every evening for years and years and years he had kept open his little room in the depths of the East Side, and had stood ready to help to salvation all who might be tempted in. Alas, it was only on the rainy and frosty nights that the people of the streets came in in numbers. Still the old man used to say that the rain was part of God's providence, and every raindrop was an angel.

Mary shook hands with the Turk, said she was glad to see him, hoped he would come often. She shook hands with the poor old dope-fiend also and looked tenderly at the two new-found acquaintances, uniting them together, as it seemed, by a smile. And they were really united, and came together regularly after that. On rainy and frosty days, when the room was full, the dope-fiend and the Turk distributed hymn-books among the drunkards, street-women, tramps, cripples who had squirmed into shelter. They held semi-official positions. They witnessed with edification the breaking into tears of hardened old sinners moved by the tender eloquence of the old father.

The Turk believed in the mission-room. He saw that those who came in became gentler; they left behind them their foul language, they were reasonable, they sang sweetly, they seldom or never insulted Mary and the old man. So he was in a way satisfied, though there was in him a great feeling of dissatisfaction about the world outside.

His four hundred dollars, which would have kept him years in the old country, swiftly disappeared in a city where the price of living is treble

that of the unprosperous countries of Europe. He was obliged to find a job. He got work on a road, repairing the surface. It was scarcely a come-down; for he found one of his neighbours in the gang was a prince of Roumania, and another was the latest descendant of Robert Bruce, one had been to college, and another was an ex-clergyman. He earned only two dollars a day, but he learned to be economical with the money he won by his work, and he escaped many frauds and swindles and began to live like an American.

In a pathetic way he came to expect a great deal from the American Christmas. He saw the excitement of all the shop-keepers and thought something really unusual was going to happen—a revelation, perhaps. On Christmas Eve he and the dope-fiend went to Madison Square Garden and saw the immense Christmas tree set up for all the children who had no little Christmas tree of their own at home. It was glittering with lamps and hung with toys and packets of sweets. A great crowd of open-eyed boys and girls were staring at it from the railing that enclosed it. On Christmas night the toys and sweets were going to be taken down and

given to the children, and carols would be sung. The children stamped their feet in the snow. It was all very wonderful; what did frost and snow matter with such a beautiful thing in view?

From the Christmas tree the dope-fiend and the Turk went back to China-town to the mission-room, and there they sang with a crowd of women who had come in to receive Mary's gifts. A great basket full of Christmas puddings was on hand, and many a poor old woman felt that Jesus was born that night indeed when she received a plum-pudding and a mince-pie from the hands of the old man's daughter.

At midnight the mission-room closed. All the puddings and pies were given away, and hundreds of folk with outstretched hands were turned away.

"A bin in your room and sang mos' ev'ry nahit, an' you han't give me no pudding," said a negress reproachfully. "You cahnt have forgot us," said a young Jew, coming for the fifth time. "If Christ would only open my eyes!" said a blind man who had got in his possession both a pudding and a pie. "Cut that out," said a cripple, "you've got your teeth in the eats. I haven't got anything, and I

guess God won't straighten my back." "You'd have to work if He did," said another, "and I reckon that wouldn't suit you."

It was clear the world could not be saved by puddings and pies, even were they distributed thrice as liberally.

The dope-fiend and the Turk said good-bye to Mary at the door, and she greeted them "A happy Christmas!"

"You don't open this place to-morrow, I suppose?" asked the Turk.

"No, we take our one holiday on Christmas night."

"Then it won't be quite so happy for me," said Turko pathetically. He had been there every night since he found it.

The opium-eater and he moved away. A strange couple they were; the one long, gaunt, stooping, disreputable, the other short and fat, toddling on his short legs, neatly if poorly dressed, and with a simple, contented, but rather pathetic look in his square face.

The East Side of New York was going to sleep. Thousands of Christian boys and girls had hung

their stockings for Santa Claus, and even Jew children had gone to bed in the expectation of presents in the morning. The streets were emptying and becoming darker. Scarcely a shop was open. There were no night-stalls and eating-places; even the all-night resorts were closed, and the musical boxes were silent in those blue palaces where the Chinese provide chop-suey and make low-life gay in the East Side. It had been snowing in occasional showers ever since nightfall. In the quiet, untrodden culs-de-sac which led down to the Hudson River there was an even coating of an inch of snow. And now the flakes came so thickly and unabatingly that even populous and filthy Rivington Street became slowly transfigured. Where the stall-keepers, hawkers, and push-cart men had been trafficking all day, selling apples and oranges, toys, candles, presents, clothes, Christmas groceries, all was silent. The barrows were gone with the sellers and the customers, and all the refuse of the market was being covered over with whiteness. Far up in the dingy houses the light of oil-lamps glimmered in the windows. Occasionally a woman would come out on the iron fire-escapes fixed to

each building and bawl to some one on an upper or lower story, or she would bawl across the street and would be answered by some one opposite. But night and the Christmas snow were gaining a great victory. Somewhere far away in Syria it was a clear night, the stars . . . one star especially was shining, and in a house of poor parents a child was born. Foaming, freshening rivers were flowing in that country. Wise kings were stalking through the night carrying gifts of frankincense and myrrh. Yes, it is strange how large this world is we call a stage. There is a majesty in the diversity of things which are happening upon it. Sad that sometimes a city like New York or London thinks that it is the world, it alone. Often when a man feels wretched it is because he is forgetting the immensity and the diversity outside.

The Turk and the opium-eater turned down Sheriff Street and Stanton Street. All these streets are outside the original city of New York. That is why they are not numbered. They come before First Street and extend to the docks. They are the dirtiest and most populous streets in the whole world; they close in also more squalor and unhap-

piness than any other streets, the dumping and huddling ground of bewildered foreign immigrants who are oblivious or ignorant of the vast urban and agricultural America outside thirsting for labour, any labour, even that of the weak hands of the decrepit and feeble.

In Stanton Street, lying in the gutter half snowed over, lay a sleeping or dying woman with a baby in her shawl, and the dope-fiend and the Turk stood in front of her and stared. Snow-flakes were settling fast on the woman's hair and scarcely dissolving on her pallid cheeks. In her shawl was a furrow of snow; the baby seemed lifeless, and indeed it was frozen.

The dope-fiend leaned down and put an arm under her and raised her. She opened her eyes and looked at him. As he raised her body her head fell back weakly and showed her white throat.

"Oh, go away, go away," she moaned. "Leave me alone, leave me where I am and go away."

"But if you lie there you'll die."

"I wan' to die. I wan' to die. I don' wan' to live. I haven't anything to live for, and nobody wants me."

The two brothers of Mary's mission-room stared at one another and asked speechless questions.

"Strange, strange!" said the Turk. "This is something that could not possibly happen in my country. There each woman belongs to some one and is precious. America has Christianity, a higher religion than ours, and yet this can happen to a woman. I do not understand it."

"Where d'you live?" asked the opium-eater of the woman.

"Nowhere. If I go home my husband'll kill me. But there's nothing to eat there, no job, no money, nothing. I've finished. You go along and leave me. I'll only get you into trouble. Leave me here in the snow. It's quiet. I shall fall asleep, the snow will cover me, and to-morrow they'll find me and my babe asleep, fast asleep."

"No, no, that can't be," said the opium-eater, "on Christmas Eve too of all nights in the year. We'll look after you. Jesus' birthday, think of that! You thought of dying. To-night instead you'll begin again. You'll start a new life. It'll be your birthday too. D'you believe in Jesus?"

"Have you found the Light?" asked Turko.

But the woman they pitifully raised had no words to give them. Her face was one unutterable ennui. "What shall we do with her?" asked the opium-eater. "Let us take her to the Adams Street Home. It is a shelter for women; they can't refuse her and it's not far."

The two of them supported the feeble woman and took her four or five blocks to the Adams Refuge. Let us call it the Adams Refuge; obviously one cannot call such institutions by their correct name in a story which reflects on their character. A remarkably blank and dreary house was placarded "Adams Home for Women. House of Charity." The windows were all dark, the doorstep deep in snow proclaimed an absence of visitors during many hours. Evidently the daughters of Eve did not throng there.

The Turk rang the bell four times, and then continued ringing with his finger on the electric button. At last, after the opium-eater had made snowballs and thrown them at many windows, a woman came out on the fire-escape on the first floor and asked them what they wanted.

"We've found a woman perishing of cold lying

in the snow. We thought you would take her in here," said the opium-eater. "She has a baby," he added thoughtfully.

"What you say, she has a baby?" asked the woman. "Is she married?"

"Yes, a respectable married woman. Her husband's out of a job and mad with hunger."

"But this is only for fallen women. We only taken in fallen women here."

"Yes, she'd fallen," said the simple Turk. "I reckon she fall, that's it, she fall in the snow and lie there, poor woman with baby, so cold, she so hungry, snow so soft, people's hearts so hard, she lie and not get up, she want to stay. Fred and I come along, respectable men sure, from Mary's mission-room. We see the woman and baby lying in the snow. No people anywhere, all gone to bed. We try lift her up. She say, 'No, leave me, leave me, let me lie here, I wan' to die.' On Christmas Eve when my Master became a little baby. I look at her baby and remember Him. We're good Christians sure, yes, we don't leave a woman to die, any night. Fred remembers Adams Refuge and we help her along here."

The woman shook her head violently, shivered, pulled her shawl round her and prepared to re-enter.

"You've come to the wrong place," said she. "We only take cases from the Police Station. You'd better take her to the Felix Home for respectable women in East Broadway. It's against the rules to take respectable women in here."

So saying she cut argument short by disappearing.

The poor Turk thought they might take the woman to the Police Station and so make her eligible for Adams Refuge. But the dope-fiend pointed out his mistake. There was nothing to do but take her two miles across the city to the Felix Home.

The woman did not utter a word. They practically carried her. They said nothing to one another, and all the time it snowed and snowed. Peace was supreme. They passed no one. Even the police had disappeared. The snow came down so thick and lights were so few that they missed their way for a while among the alleys of the Jewish quarter. But they emerged at last on the

vast broad East-end highway, the Mile End Road of New York. They grew taller by the cones of snow on their heels, and by the time they reached the so-called Fortunate home they were white from head to foot with snowflakes. Well, well! Darkness again, no open doors nor open arms, no look of warmth or welcome. The opium-eater's heart sank within him; he knew in advance that another refusal was coming.

They wakened up the porter and he was very cross. He came to the door in trousers and shirt, rubbed his eyes and stared at them.

"Wha' yer want?"

"We've brought a woman who needs shelter."

"At this hour of the night? Have you brought a recommendation?"

"She's freezing to death," said Turko.

"No, we brought no recommendation," said the opium-eater. "We found her lying asleep in the road. Her baby, I'm afraid, is frozen."

At this point the baby cried feebly. It was not dead. The exercise had brought warmth to both woman and child, and the little one had revived.

"The baby's starving. I can' feed it. I'm empty," said the woman supplicatingly. This was the first word of hope from her lips.

The porter rubbed his thigh with his palm, made a long mouth and said they'd made a mistake. They ought to have taken her to the Home of Charity or such a place where women on the streets were taken in. The Felix Home was only for respectable married women or single females of virtue. Sorry to turn them away, but it was their fault coming to the wrong place.

"But she's dying," said the Turk. "The baby will die."

"Soon be morning," said the porter nonchalantly, and shut the door.

"Say, where can we get a recommendation?" asked the opium-eater unprofitably.

No answer. Never mind. At that hour no one would get up and write a recommendation.

"Let's take her down the Bowery," said the Turk. "There I have seen you can get a room for twenty cents."

They took her to the Bowery, wakened up a lodging-house keeper and hired a room on the

ninth story. There was a bed in it, a table and a chair. The woman, gasping from climbing the stairs, lay down on the bed. It was cold and dreary. They spread a quilt over her. Whilst they were doing so the door opened and an evil face looked in, looked round, grinned and withdrew. "This is not a safe place for a woman," said the opium-eater. "You sit here and watch her whilst I go and waken somebody and buy some milk."

The dope-fiend disappeared. The woman lay unmoving. The baby whimpered now and then. Heavy steps sounded on the stairs, there was a sound of furniture being moved, and far away some one was playing on a viol. The Turk sat dreaming. The tiny gas flame, the merest match-light it was, scarcely saved the room from darkness; he could have slept. But he kept saying to himself, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not," and he thought of the old man's prayer, "Make the darkness comprehend!" and he thought of the two homes and of Mary the mother of Jesus and of Mary of the mission-room, and of the woman they had found. Her name was Mary, no doubt. All such women were

named Mary. "Strange thing, this Christianity," he said to himself. "Now, in Turkey . . ."

He was interrupted by the opening of the door and the apparition of the tall, gaunt, ragged, stooping opium-fiend, carrying in one hand a steaming saucepan and in the other an earthenware mug. He came in on tiptoe, assuming that the woman was asleep, though he intended to waken her anyway. He put the saucepan and the mug deliberately on the table and drew from his pocket a chunk of white bread. It perhaps tells something of the man when I say he had brought a teaspoon also.

He put the woman up in bed and sat beside her with one arm round her, and, with the mug full of bread and milk, he fed her with the teaspoon, fed her and the poor little baby alternately, and the Turk sat watching them.

When one mugful had been eaten and the opium-eater moved to the table to break bread again and pour on warm milk the woman looked at him, cried out, "God bless you," and collapsed into tears.

The Turk offered his handkerchief, and the

opium-eater wiped her tears away and told her to bear up. The baby showed its toothless gums, and a faint smile passed over its wee lips. The baby was all right; it would live—a strong baby.

The woman received the second helping. When it was finished and the opium-eater turned to make up a third mugful he found the Turk kneeling on the floor.

"Wha's that for?" asked he.

"I am giving thanks to my Master," said the Turk, "that we have saved the woman and the baby, and that I have found a man who lives according to the Gospel of St. John. I was told there were Christians in this country, and though nearly all Americans told me there were not, I believed. I didn't believe in the Americans, I believed in St. John's Gospel. It existed; it was alive; it must make Christians."

The dope-fiend administered the third helping, and then the woman and her baby lay back and fell asleep. The two men sat in silence and watched her till morning, till late in the morning. Then the woman who had sold the milk and allowed it to be

heated on her gas promised to look after the other, and the dope-fiend and the Turk made themselves responsible for the rent.

At the New Year the woman was reconciled to her husband. He had found a job and was happy again and wanted her back to share his happiness.

The Turk and the opium-eater continued to give out hymn-books at Mary's mission-room. They were stand-by's of the place. They were sure to be there every evening. One evening when the old man had a swollen throat they were even given charge of the room and conducted the service themselves. Another evening Mary gave the Turk the keys and he came early. When she and her father came later they were astonished to see the electric light being switched off and on as if some one were playing with it. When they got in they found the Turk placidly and childishly happy turning the light button up and down. The dope-fiend was sitting half asleep in the front seat.

"Why are you doing that?" asked Mary.

"It's a miracle," said the Turk, "isn't it?"

"What is?"

"Why, the light. You press this and then comes

splendid light; we don't have this in Turkey; we are only poor Moslems."

"But that's got nothing to do with religion."

"It is Christian," said the Turk. "So I love it."

Mary laughed.

"You ought to go to classes and learn about it and understand," said she. "It is made by waterfalls."

The Turk looked puzzled.

"You go to classes!" said she. "You will learn to make it yourself."

"Oh, I should like to," said the Turk.

The upshot was that the Eastern saved money and went to a science class and mastered the mysteries of electricity.

He has now returned to Turkey with the electric light, an instalment of the light that never was on sea or land.

He will surely return. For the poor old dope-fiend has become an infrequent visitor at Mary's mission-room. He staggers down the street, waxen-faced, delirious-eyed. His soul must be calling to the Turk, and the Turk must yearn for him, for the gentle heart of the only Christian he

found in America, the gaunt, stooping, ragged opium-fiend who must forget the evil city somewhere, either with the Turk and Mary or in a Chinese parlour.

A RUSSIAN BEGGAR

Unhappy Martha goes in quest of the Face also—from the sordid misery of the starving poor to the spacious places where live the rich. To her, Jesus is the one most unlike her present state; to her, Jesus is the one who would have mercy.

V

A RUSSIAN BEGGAR

Unhappy Martha! I saw her to-day at the porch of a rich church. The church was full of people, and the priests in purple robes moved to and fro among the ikons, whilst little surpliced boys, white as angels, swayed the censers. The rich images, deep set in jewels, exhaled strange influences out of the gloom. The famous wonder-working Virgin looked over her flowers at the grove of wasting candles around her. Voronof, the merchant, clad in furs, held a taper in his well-worn fingers and stood before the ikon. Did Mary see him as he placed his votive light among those others? He bowed to the ground and crossed himself in deep devotion.

Martha, the beggar, stood outside in the porch among others who, like herself, were tattered and starved. She was there before the service began, and she watched the people going in to pray—the rich Moscow matrons in heavy silks, the elegant

young ladies who tripped daintily up the steps in their new goloshes, the young men in high collars and smart German ties, the portly business men in deep overcoats. She saw these pass by and prayed them with unavail. Then in his carriage came Voronof, the merchant; the fine black horses knew whom they were carrying, and the driver, looking impossibly large and important, knew that the one who sat behind him was no ordinary man. Slowly, and with dignity, the merchant alighted on to the pavement and made his way to the church door, whilst the beggars, half awed, half desperate, almost barred his way with supplicating hands.

None of the worshippers had looked at Martha; if by chance they glanced at her face, they took away their eyes immediately. Martha was not pleasant to look upon, she had no nose, her eyes looked like the handles of a pair of scissors. There were the marks of sin on her face, evil features, lines of hunger and crime and dark abysses where horror lurked. The eyes of the worshippers going to Mass avoided the defilement of looking upon an evil sight. But Voronof, the merchant, with his suave, grave eyes looked at her, and, as it

were, started. A tremor passed along his lip, but he passed, and even he gave nothing; he walked straight by every beggar away into the church, and not one of them was a farthing the richer. It is not a custom to give alms before Mass, but there are copecks for many when the worshippers come out. Other people followed Voronof, till finally the church was full, and the beggars knew by the singing and the incense that the service had commenced.

Martha waited, Martha with her few rags about her, not enough to hide her grey breast, her poor, grey, withered, outcast breast, itself a rag. She stood at the door with the others, stood there with a blank mind and lived strange lives under an unmoving suspense of rags.

She had no words. When the people went in, her life flame faded low and dull, her brain was too starved to yield even thought words. She only waited there unmoving, scarce a finger twitching. You would have said she was sleeping as an overtired sentry slumbers at his post. But one soul of hers was looking through its eyes quietly and without exertion. One soul, and before it on a grey

disc it watched two spots that moved together and apart fretfully. Martha stood with her shrunk body loose in her rags, her poor feet flat on the stones, her lips dried together, every word starved out of her mind. She looked into herself silently at the black spots on the grey disc—will they come out, won't they come out? . . .

Those who were nearest the church door would stand best chance. The beggars furtively eyed the gendarme at the corner and fought for places. A turbulent cripple squirming at Martha's knees shuffled over her feet, but she did not notice him. She watched the grey discs, and now there appeared on it little sharp zigzags playing nervously; then other zigzags appeared, opposing ones, fast moving; the picture was full of fretfulness. Martha in the church porch shut her eyes—devils catch them, fiery devils burn them, grind them to powder, burn them, strike them down, catch them,—burn them. . . .

Voronof was kneeling at the altar. A priest consecrated and broke the holy Bread, another priest prepared the wine-cup, in which the Bread was put, and the worshippers partook of the sacri-

fice which shows us One in Christ. "This is the Bread of Life and the Body of Christ, the Wine and Blood. Whoso eateth of the Body of Christ entereth into His portion and taketh His cross; whoso tasteth the Wine drinketh of His cup." The choir sang the chorus of the Mass. Then some one half-opened the church door.

There was a whiff of incense and a burst of music. Martha started. But it was long before the end of the service. She was cold. She would have stamped her feet and run about, but she was too hungry; if she moved a muscle she would feel more hungry. The spots and the zigzags and the grey disc had vanished now, and Martha opened her eyes. A dreamy film was before her and a soul looked into it and listened, listened to the ghost of a song—quite a starved little song, and far away:

"Poor Martha
Unhappy Martha . . ."

What then? Was she pitying herself? How had she come to sing that little song? Over and over again, hastily and in thin notes, the little tune ran. Now it was full of excitement and then in a

minute it was slow and melancholy again, first as if she were sobbing to herself, then as if she were singing a child to sleep, rocking it up and down in her arms, and then again madly and frantically in breathless repetition. After a moment the excitement was over, and she was back again listening to some one gently crooning. She trembled and looked at the door. Over and over again, and then faster and faster sounded the song, and then shorter, so, "Poor unhappy Martha, poor unhappy Martha." Suddenly the other beggars looked at her, for she broke into an excited shudder—eugh, heugh, heugh, heugh. . . .

Then all was calm again. She saw a space cleared away in her mind; there was a little room and a table in it, and she kissed the table. It was a little empty table. Martha fell quite flat upon it and could not raise herself. . . . Then suddenly she had raised herself, and the table had disappeared, and she saw her sister Vera, and again the plaintive little song was humming in her mind.

And the song was full of wistfulness and tears, she would have wept if she could. But suddenly

she saw piled baskets of white bread, baskets, baskets. . . . The church door opened, some one was coming out; at least the music and the incense burst out and the voice of a priest sounded also: "And Jesus loved"; the other beggars smartened up and rubbed their hands. Martha half awakened. But at the word "loved" the door closed. No one was coming out.

"Jesus loved!"

"That Jesus gave away piles of money," said ugly Peter, the paralytic. "I wish he would come to church, we should all get roubles."

No one paid any attention, but Martha blinked. Jesus, who was he? Was there a man called Jesus? Martha saw a face in front of her, suave, grave.

A policeman was staring at them, one by one, as if searching for a criminal.

"I've seen Jesus," said Martha calmly.

Ugly Peter grinned. The policeman stared as if in doubt whether he ought to arrest any one. "One of her customers," said a street arab, smearing the glass of one of the ikons with his dirty coat. "Here, I want you," said the official, pretending to dive among the tatterdemalions in chase

of the urchin. A smile and a frown dwelt together on the policeman's face, he had forgotten Martha.

"I've seen Jesus," thought Martha to herself, as the face of Voronof the merchant hovered before her imagination. "I've seen Jesus." Then the grey disc again appeared and a lump of stale bread whirled about on it; it fell towards Martha, then rolled back, came to her, ran away impishly. Martha was full of fretfulness and hope—what would it be, then, a piece of white bread at Smolin's, a piece of white bread, a long piece of white bread, or would it be only a lump of black bread? Lumps of white and black bread danced and jumped up and down before her on the disc. In a minute they would be coming out. "Lord God, be merciful."

So it happened; the priest pronounced benediction and raised the gold cross above the people. All bowed and crossed themselves and kissed the sign, and thereupon shuffled along the passages of exit. The church door opened and the worshippers issued forth, and to right and to left, and

according to custom, distributed farthings to God's poor collected there. But the crowd of beggars without had become almost as numerous as the worshippers within. Martha moved forward and stretched two skinny, yellow hands—two, that she might have two chances. Poor Martha, one, two, three passed her. She trembled, the zigzags played on the grey disc—"catch them, burn them, grind them to powder, burn them." But she found sounds and words. "For Christ's sake, for Christ's sake spare me one farthing, one little copeck, a copechka, for Christ's sake, O Lord, O Lord God, a poor sinner begs, a poor old sinner. Bread for the love of God, bread for an old sinner?" And the wild zigzags still meant, "Burn them, kill them, damn, grind, burn." "Be so good, kind lady. Remember Christ, remember a sinner. Ah! good prince, God bless you, God remember this to you on your day." A man in furs was fumbling in his pocket. He would evidently find something for the old woman; he found a large coin, and put it in Martha's hands mumbling a blessing. The skinny fingers closed and she looked up. She

looked up and saw the face, and exclaimed, "Jesus!" And Voronof, for it was he, hurried across to his carriage and in a few seconds was gone. Martha was left standing; she opened her hand and saw the coin—it was bright and silver. She had never seen the like before, a silver rouble, a large and wonderful coin. "Jesus," she said, staringly at the delicately engraved portrait of Nicholas the Second. She put the coin to her lips, felt it all round with her fingers, looked at it, gloated over it, and there was joy which found no words, only she saw absurd pictures of tables with piles of flour upon them. But as the coin lay in her palm a red, hairy, hungry hand rushed in and snatched and the coin was gone.

"Rrr! Give me that money, devil, beast, give it back, give it back before I tear out your eyes, cross eyes, scabby beast, you starved beggar, you beast!" Martha tried to get back her money from the grinning fellow who had stolen it, she threatened, pulled, scratched, agonised. . . .

Then suddenly in her heart the zigzags were gone, and she simply saw Vera and her mother, and she heard again the ghost of that unhappy

song—poor Martha, unhappy Martha. Something had broken in her. The beggar struck her in the mouth.

"It was silver money. Give it back," she spluttered.

"Now then, you diseases, you maggot beds," said the gendarme, hurrying up. He pushed the thief into the roadway. The latter slunk away quietly, and Martha, recognising the dreaded voice of the policeman, also passed out humbly. The beggar shook his fist and swiftly disappeared. Martha was left.

The afternoon passed fruitlessly. She left the tavern at dusk and moved unsteadily along the high road. That was the road along which Voronof's carriage rolled easily away. It led into the West End, to the clean streets and the large white houses. The beggars are not allowed up there.

A handsome equipage came quickly round a corner into one of the fashionable squares, black horses, a fine driver, and, sitting at his ease, an elderly gentleman. It might have been he. Martha reeled on the pavement and clutched at a lamppost. The carriage crossed the square and was

gone. An irate policeman strode over and asked what she wanted there.

"Jesus," she whispered.

"You won't find Jesus here," said he with a grin, and turned her back.

THE STUDENT

The face of Him who wipes away the tears from our eyes, the Joy of all the afflicted.

VI

THE STUDENT

Imagine the town at night and the horror of it in the heart of a man who is seeking a place where he may commit suicide.

Yonder is the steeple clock with fiery face. Splendidly and triumphantly that angry face looks out over the sleeping town, and would take offence, but cannot since it rules alone. Superbly the face glares out into the night, and the stonework above the clock frowns like dense hair upon a low white brow. The town sleeps, but the face looks out vigilantly and steadfastly, as if ever-expectant of menace. Every quarter-hour the stress becomes intense—expectation, in which seems mingled not a little pale terror, ranges so high.

It is fourteen minutes past one; nightmare broods upon the city. An eternity of stillness in a minute, and then suddenly the danger is past. *A*

quarter past one! The chime outbreaks. Time in the tower chuckles to himself in relief, "Ah, so there was no danger." The chime ceases: its exclamation was unremarked, or is felt to have been out of place. There is an ominous silence as it were behind the tower. The clock looks full of anxiety, the face strains every power to hear movements behind, movement in that sibilant stillness so pregnant with mystery. The conspirators are manœuvring, they are discussing almost inaudibly who it is shall strike the blow. The face is full of anger and dread. Surely it will raise one of those long dark arms that hang in dark shadow on each side of the tower! Dread, anger, suspense, dread, rage, proud rage, indifference but anger, dread. . . . Surely the face will suddenly turn round and look the other way. Just for a moment it will look to assure itself. This cannot last—no, and will not. One reflective moment, the face clears with comprehension of the mystery. *Half past one!*—ah, so that was what it was—so now there is no danger! No doubt of it this time. There is no more to be feared from behind. Most angrily the eyes flash out far away to the low

hills beyond the city. To east and to west they look, and clasp the whole town in a vice. The eyes narrow with cruelty and the light is sharp and keen. No comfort comes from the hills, only the morning air a little dank, with its unwelcome message. Time sulks, and will sulk more and more till morning now, for as the new work-day commences, the light will go from his features, and men with dull eyes will scan his pale grey morning face with its daily sulk upon it. The face broods on this, and there comes a moment when one expects it to abdicate in disgust, and one fancies that next moment the fire will go out, and that in plain grey garb the shrunken, humble face will slowly climb down the tower and disappear. And whilst one's fancy contemplates the phantasmal vision of an eye-socket looking out evilly and enigmatically into the night, one is suddenly startled by loud laughter. *A quarter to two!* Long laughter, three times too long; surely a smile would have sufficed. One cannot believe in that laughter; *that* is not the final comment on the thoughts of Time. Time unpacks his heart with laughter. Time is bluffing himself. And not too successfully, for

mark with what uneasiness he is now sitting there on his shadow throne. But a certain comfort comes to him, and all at once he seems to whisper, "Am I not Matthew, Mark, Luke, John?" There is no answer. So Time also needs to deceive himself and have his little sentimentalism. Thereby certainly he gets peace of soul to nerve himself for coming duty. One sees it written in the face, "Soon it will be two o'clock, let no one breathe, let no one disturb me in the discharge of my office." Time nerves himself for the effort. He gathers strength, then telling forth the whole experience of the hour, he gives his verdict and marks off—*One, Two.*

Time rules and glares in the darkness. Far away the dark river water wallows and incessantly turns and waves the light-beams which it catches from the tower. Heavy river-boats, in dank dulled red and green, lie moored at the bank and hobnob together. Theirs also is the night, they have stolen a solitude for themselves, and even the glaring steeple eye overlooks them. They seem to say to one another, "He was here to-night." The red and green hulks rock sideways to one another.

"Who?"—"The student. His eye was dull, his legs trembled on the brink . . ."

Along the towing-path one dim lamp shines in a night shop—for whom is that light? On the other side of the river the wooden mill-wheel stands inactive, and but for that the eye finds no rest in looking over the water. The wheel is far away and shadowy, but at this moment still seems to reflect on the recollection of a grey human form that paused at the water's edge and balanced an idea, and seemed about to act—the form of a young man whose eye wandered over the darkness and found no resting-place till it suddenly settled on the wheel. Then the idea had been outweighed.

A pale moon swims out of the clouds and sheds peculiar light on the long ripples of the murky water. Broad and calm and dirty is the water, and the great ooze bed on which it rests is far below the surface. There is a smell of fish—plates of fish-bones lie unwashed on the coarse tables of riverside eating-rooms. The grimy women who served the meals now sleep in dark back rooms. There is an odour of spirits and stale food. That ugly dwindling line of squat dwellings looks like a

reptile's tail. There the common people sleep; these are the theatres of ill dreams. There by the stone steps he, that is, the student, paused angry. Grey and calm and deep is the pool below. The angry Persian lion's face of the tower is flouted by a sooty factory shaft. Softly the ooze washes. And within hearing of the *ish-ish-ish-wash* of the water lie huddled together below the coping poor, ugly, tattered sleepers.

"So they can sleep," he had thought. "They can sleep, and they have their share in all the comfort of the night. These are the most unhappy, and close by the stream they lie. Should I prove myself less happy by seeking refuge in the stream itself? But am I not forced here?"

Not far away is that spot, though from the student's window it cannot be seen. His lodging is not upon the riverside, but separated from it by some rows of squalid dwellings. This is the students' quarter, the place of young men, poorer than the poorest of those who lie in riverside slums. The eye of the steeple scarcely takes cognisance of these dark roofs, so eager it seems to flash in the spacious places of the grander city beyond. But

below these huddled roofs lie the strong, the young, the new. Those high, black houses, subdivided to cells, close in room by room all the young learning, the wit, the life of which this city will be proud to boast in the days to come. Some have rooms to themselves, some share single rooms, and in some dens three or four lie together among the litter of cigarette-ends, volumes on law and medicine and philosophy, dust of past ages, whisky-droppings of the last students' gathering, old clothes, newspapers, picture postcards. Two or three of every four lie in twisted heaps and snore plaintively. In body, weak through lack of nourishment; in mind, stupid through excess of university "cram"; in heart, confused, tinging their dreams alternately with melancholy and with gaiety, with suspicion and with hilarity, with dread and with serenity—they sleep.

Happy they! One may be solitary, but for four it is impossible. A companion is a buoy that keeps one afloat, dancing in the sun upon the surface of the deep and bitter sea. But what of those solitary ones who have nought but work to save themselves from themselves, those who by chance are without companions, those who for shame and

pride and the necessity of their souls may not share their dwelling-room with any other? These are they who do great things, who toil while others sleep, who find and spend the savings of energy that lie hidden in themselves—who live on their capital.

The student who paused by the rocking river tubs, who thought to find out death in the muddy water, but who at last wearily returned to the little room he had nearly left for ever, is one of those who have, as it were, taken out an annuity for themselves. His heritage, all that was passed over to him in body, strength, secret strength, soul and mind, force and glory of soul and mind, he had, as it were, realised and exchanged for an annuity. Life had forced him to this. He had been unable to find conditions under which he could thrive and blossom and live on his annual fruits. That which men call life, that is, conditions of modern life which were for him also conditions of death, had forced him back upon himself.

So it was that from an ordinary happy boy who lived as careless as the bird of the forest, he had slowly begun to change to a self-questioning, self-

absorbed young man. Boyhood had passed, then came the stress of self-responsibility, the taking up of a "means of life." To earn a livelihood he must needs rise with the hour when the light died from the steeple clock, and all day within sight of the sulky face he needs must keep mind and soul and face fixed in one will. At night, when the fiery face glared friskily and impatiently over the evening throngs, he would come home and eat and talk, and smile a little and then sleep.

He had become troubled. Because he was not at ease, he was bound to think. And because he remained constantly in dis-ease, thinking became a habit. The more disease ate into his soul, the keener and more profound became the thinking and the questioning, till folk began to exclaim over him, "How clever! Why, what an intellect he has!"

The disintegration of his being forced him to seek salvation in all manner of ways, his disease took new aspects, new developments. It sent him to women and made him the most wonderful of lovers, the most melancholy of poets, the cleverest of mockers. Vanity was an aggravation of his dis-

ease; it flushed across his disordered and bared self and stirred all to fever.

And he sought salvation in books, and his being found all books to be the memoirs of people who had suffered as himself. Then it seemed that he also had experiences, had knowledges that no one had written down, and he wished to save the world. "Am I not a genius?" he asked of himself. Others who knew him were almost ready to call him such. The great world in which he earned a livelihood became to his mind a great heartless machine that used souls like fuel, and used them for no end but for the multiplication of cases like his own. All around he saw eighths of men who had been born of mothers stronger, richer than themselves. Now he discerned nothing that would grow larger. Men rubbed together in the press of civilisation and, like rocks, wasted one another away to desert sand. Sahara dust was the children of rocks as the pigmies were the children of men.

The student gave up the machine, left it as far as possible, went apart and resolved to build himself whole again—then to rescue whom he could from

the great death-system whence he hoped he had himself escaped.

See him now; the gleam of the steeple clock strikes across his pale face as he sits in his room alone, this last night. Everywhere it is grey and dark, scarcely a form is visible except the shadowy bulk of the student, and the gleam of his white fingers in his thick black hair. Only the tall books in serried ranks upon dusty shelves on the wall look profound and secret, and deep in consultation among themselves. Grey are the walls, and black above and below—and darker than elsewhere, there on the floor, the student's bed is spread out.

Great is the unhappiness of all lonely ones; fierce the battle of the many against the one, of the rule against the exceptions. The rules of Progress will not tolerate exceptions. If one be an exception, one had better not be an exception to a rule. Happy those who lie in the sun of the old world, those who have not yet been called in for fuel. Unhappy, incurable, remains the part-consumed one who escapes. It is better that the singed moth die, since it can never fly again.

The student sits with cold face in cold hands, and the pain of his soul is sometimes thoughts, and sometimes thoughts are the pain. Not once has he looked out and remarked the brazen stare of the steeple clock: it nears three, and the face looks sulkier, less sharp, more dream-like. At a thought, the young man raises his eyes and sees it. A white hand goes forward in the darkness and a blind moves softly down. Now darkness itself seems curtained. The student sits down once more and his head rests in his hands. Pain and thought are in harmony, and he is softly moving away from the town and his life; he slides softly, easily forward into sleep, when suddenly, gently, equably, almost incredibly the door steals open and a form appears.

The man in the chair does not move, but after a moment his head rises and he leans back.

"Who is it—a friend?" Swiftly, almost hurriedly, the visitor comes across the room, and then opens his arms. In full-arm embrace he gathers the young man to himself. Then answering in movement, the unhappy one comes nearer and presses close to the other, nervously. There is a

long silence. Then comes a soft whisper: "All men suffer; they are all weary. All men need sleep, and all need love. A man comes to a man with love, and there is no longer any sorrow in all the world. Every one is full of secret weariness and sorrow which is uncomforted. There is no man who would not weep if he could find the bosom wherein to shed the tears. The whole world is sad, and looks sadly from every eye. The whole world is like a woman who for one long cloudy day yearns for the kiss of a lover who has turned away from her. Every one needs to hear the voice, 'You are unhappy, you are weary; so are we all, but sleep comes, death comes, and love is here . . .'"

Less vigilantly towards the morning the tower-face scanned the town; and as the dawn drew up, the spite and fire seemed to pass away innocuously.

In the early morning light the student sat asleep, head in hand, at his little table. The light came greyly into the room. He wakened, rubbed his eyes, started up, and drew the blind. "Evening and morning are not alike," he said, and smiled. Then a thought came to his lips:

Jesu, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly.

"I used not to believe in that, did I? But now," . . . he smiled, "now I go forward as a comforter."

THE SHADOW

His habitation will not be found on this world, for he seeketh the City, and all his resting-places, even his grave, are but inns on the pilgrim's road.

VII

THE SHADOW

"I HAVE determined to give up my work in the Office of Ways and Means, and to exchange it for a roving life. I am going to take a big jump out of all these surroundings and begin to live, get out and see Nature and the world, sleep under the open sky, write poetry, say my prayers again . . ."

"I know, I know," said the Hon. Richard Leverlast, the head of that particular branch of the Department where Saxby served. "But I put it to you—are you not throwing away the substance for the shadow? You have a hundred and fifty a year, rising by twenty-five to three hundred pounds, is that not so? after which you may be promoted on to a higher grade and eventually retire on a good pension; there is little to do and the post is safe. No one is ever turned out for anything short of crime. You are enabled to dress well. Your position here gives you a certain standing in soci-

ety. The hours are light, you can easily take up a hobby such as poetry in your spare time. I daresay many Civil Service poets have written of their best in office hours—those hurriedly scribbled sheets popped hastily under a blotting-pad or into a drawer of the desk when some one else goes by. Your post is a good thing and many thousands would be glad to get it. You won't get anything half as good by leaving us."

"I shall be free," said Saxby. "This life here seems to be a still-born life. It is a comfortable and safe billet, I know, but pardon me if I say that I don't fit it, and it doesn't fit me."

"Well, you know best," replied the Hon. Richard Leverlast, feeling that perhaps he had said more than good taste would allow, but unable to deny himself a parting repetition of phrase. "Believe me, you are throwing away the substance for the shadow."

Saxby went out from the great man's presence, and he said to himself joyfully, "I have thrown away the substance for the shadow. Darling shadow! Let that be my motto as I go out into the vast untried experienced world. . . . Darling

shadow! for whom I would give up any material thing that did not seem to fit."

This was the beginning of Saxby's new life. His father before him had died in the service of the Office of Ways and Means. He himself had been carefully trained for a clerical post there. Old Mr. and Mrs. Saxby had asked their boy no questions as to what destiny would be his, though if they had he would not have been able to give them a satisfactory reply. He had never chosen anything in his life, all had been carefully planned and the plans had been realised.

But a spiritual passion grew in him and urged him out of the safety and comfort of his carefully chosen destiny. He wanted to taste danger, wanted to take risks, to see life, and to get out of the world where everything was arranged. He had a soul which yearned naturally for self-expression, and the strange thing was that he seemed to have no self to express. He tended towards poetry, but the verses he wrote were immature, crude. No one cared to read them, not even Saxby himself. He would keep them a little while and look at them wonderingly and lovingly, but at last in distaste

tear them up or burn them—as hopelessly inadequate and misrepresentative of his thought and passion. Yet one might very fairly have said to him in the moment of his disgust:

"Why do you burn them? The verses are not very good, but they do express *you*. You are not Shakespeare, you know."

Perhaps Saxby himself had some inkling of that, for when his poems were burnt he would frequently harp back to them and say:

"You know I wrote some wonderful poems last year, but I burnt them. How foolish I was!"

But he never had any verses to show, anything to which to draw attention, and he sent nothing to the press in the hope of publication. He did not seem to be ambitious, and yet of course he was ambitious in a way, if wishing to get a larger life were ambition. Hence his revolt against his preordained safe post and destiny in life. His ambition was spiritual ambition, not material ambition. Worldly ambition would have prompted him to remain at the Office of Ways and Means and excel, but spiritual ambition against all wise counsel drove him out into the wilderness.

So he gave up all for what he called the darling shadow. And the soft life was exchanged for a hard one. He wrote some wonderful poems just before he took the final, irretrievable step. His decision became a sacred choice, and his breast was full of singing birds.

"I feel as if in me a child were being born," said he. "This Christmas is a spiritual birthday for me, and I shall always look back to it. Next year will be the year One for me." And his poetry proclaimed that he had heard the angels sing.

But once he had taken the step he soon found himself naked and trembling and solitary and friendless. Clothes became shabby, money grew less. He looked less important, people in the streets gave him less respect—he was clearly less respectable. He starved. He was insulted, spat upon, kicked. He could write no poems: he was plunged in grief. And yet he did not consider himself to have been wrong in his choice, never regretted what he had done. But the meanness of the world constantly preyed on his mind. He suffered greatly. And there was little comfort forth-

coming for him from men. "What an orphan I am!" said he to himself and smiled.

His life was still cast in towns, but he escaped. When the winter was over there was no restraint on him to keep among the settlements and trading-places which he had indeed renounced in renouncing the post in the Office of Ways and Means. And he discovered this in the spring and gave a great sigh of relief. It takes some time getting out of the machine, and often you think you are out when you have merely taken a step from that familiar portion where you fulfil a part to a less familiar portion where you have no part to fulfil. Saxby turned to the country, to Nature, and found a freer life, and once more singing birds were in his breast. He had got from Giant Despair's Castle out away on to the Delectable Mountains.

It would be a long matter to trace the history of his self-expression, that is, the progress of his spiritual life. In the presence of the beauty of Nature—the majestical hills and sunrise, the infinite sea—its chorus upon the shore, the lovely verdant and blossoming breast of the world, white, wan rivers, dark, mysterious forests—his first thought

was: "How all this expresses me!" He seemed to find a kindred. He was nearer akin to Nature than to the brick and stone of Downing Street, Whitehall, Charing Cross. The society of the stars and clouds and flowers and birds was more his society than that over which the urbane Leverlast presided. It was the society where "none intrudes," which Byron found.

He began to give praise to God for his escape. The poems which he wrote now he did not burn, but rather chose to give them an immortality. He succeeded as a poet.

But he did not find rest in his new happiness. From learning that Nature expressed him, that it was akin to him, he went on to a new spiritual realisation. He felt the sadness of Nature. And after that he discerned that Nature was not at all sad in itself but supremely, perfectly happy, and only he was sad regarding it. The sunshine was vainly sweet, and because he was himself eternally sad he distinguished in the music of the sea a moan and a lament, the note of sadness of which Matthew Arnold wrote. He ascribed sadness and an expression of plaintive melancholy to the nightingale's

song, whereas it was in reality a simple song of courtship, and the bird might say to him:

> "Nay, wanderer, nay, be comforted,
> My voice is rife
> To tempt anear a little wife.
> What is't to thee?
> Alone is night not fair to me."

And now many of the poems which Saxby had given to be printed he would fain have recalled and burned. "These earlier poems do not express me," he would say.

Still, for those who could guess his life and his passion, they were true poems, and were prized by thousands who were striving in various ways to be *free*.

Saxby was recognised as a poet, and the first new money of the world began to flow to him. Then Saxby said to himself:

"Now let me affirm that in tatters and rags as I walk these foreign roads, bespattered with mire, unshorn, penniless, half-starved, I am yet more fittingly clothed, my exterior is more in keeping with my soul than it was in the old days of silk hat, perfect black dress, white hands, gold watch,

and walking-stick. I look a queer figure, but this is more nearly me than that other."

And nevertheless he returned to London. He made many mistakes, fell into many errors and pitfalls, was lured into many charming ways which turned out to be false, but he always escaped. He was asked to edit a review, to start a poetry *shop*, to lecture on poetry, to give professional readings of contemporary poetry in drawing-rooms; was offered an official post at the British Museum; and finally, twenty years after his first renunciation, he was privately offered the poet-laureateship. All these were baits thrown out by the world to a spiritual rebel, and some of them were tempting. Saxby was tempted and seemed to fall. But he never lay flat. He always started up again, and was away before the snarer could put a net over him. Large salaries were offered him, salaries compared with which the old hundred and fifty rising by twenty-five to three hundred pounds seemed silly enough, and fees were offered him, but again and again he escaped.

He tried not to attach any importance to money, and, as often happens in such cases, money loved

him; it sought him out and flowed into his pockets in a way in which it seldom comes to those who seek it all their lives.

He lived a simple, undecorated life—as if waiting for some true raiment and heavenly fittingness. It was said that he was humble, and yet I discern a superlative noble pride in him. And a great gulf separated him from the insipid youth he looked when he made his first renunciation. His spiritual gain expressed itself in all his movements, and lent a true grace to his ways; his face had modified, or dull masks had fallen away revealing a strong, fearless, expressive countenance. He had the look of a man, and might have been pointed to as a fair expression of what man really is. He was typical of man as he really is, and how far removed is the characteristic average man of our age from such a type. In the latter sense Shakespeare and Dante and Homer and, may we say it, even Jesus, were typical.

A man humble in the world because he was not of the world and could not accept a place there, but a man of unlimited spiritual claims!

In later years he loved to travel. He wandered

far and wide over the world. I say far and wide, but it should be admitted that he did not himself consider his journeyings as far.

"How far away you've been!" people would say.

"Oh, don't say *far*," he would reply. "It is quite near. The world is a little place. There's no far away in it. I can imagine a 'far away,' but that's only when I look up at the stars at night and think of a beyond."

But he liked the sensation of travelling; it was more congenial to his soul than sitting still. He tramped the mountains, went on long river journeys, ocean journeys in great liners, went up in aeroplanes.

He did not care, however, for the aeroplane, and considered it disappointing. He was absolutely fearless, and that sense of danger which is like champagne to some simply did not exist for him. The sad and unsatisfying thing about an aeroplane was that it had always to come to earth somewhere, it could not go on.

He liked long train journeys, the sort that can be obtained in Russia, Siberia, America, of thousands of miles. He never had what may be called a

lasting home or abiding-place, and if one of those friends who knew him whispered in the midst of a dance or asked of another on the way to a place of business: "Where do you think old Saxby is now?" the answer would be: "Oh, probably wandering along in some fearfully slow train from God-knows-where to anywhere." Others would remark disdainfully: "There'd be some sense if he were likely to find something, if he would bring something back from these remote places. As the Japanese said when told of all the trouble Shackleton took to reach the South Pole, 'What does he expect to find there?' "

One of those rare times when Saxby was back in London I called on him at his poor rooms. He had only been there a fortnight, and yet one of the first things he said to me was:

"You don't know how homesick I feel!"

"Why," said I, "where do you consider your home to be now? Have you settled down somewhere in a distant land?"

"No," he replied, "I haven't settled down yet. I meant that the 'wander fever' as they call it, is on me again. I'd like to be in a train. I am nearest

to being at home when I am in a train, in one of those long-distance trains in Eastern Europe, where one lives while one travels. Here in England, alas, there is always the feeling that a train journey is so much time subtracted from life. That is why you cut your journeys shorter and shorter when rather you should lengthen them out for delight.

"Directly the train rolls off I feel at home. Suppose it is night, and I compose myself to sleep and dream. I waken when the train stops, and am in torment whilst it waits in a station or before a signal, but when it moves again I give a sigh of relief, and smuggle up in my sleeping things and fall asleep again. So it will be with me on my death-bed perhaps. Suddenly I shall feel myself moving and be at rest."

And this characteristic piece of self-expression takes me to one of the last errors that crept into the life of Saxby, and to tell of his triumph over it.

As the poet grew older rheumatism attacked his joints, and it was considerably less easy for him to move about over the face of the globe and remain a wanderer to the end. Friends suggested to him

that he should try to find a house somewhere in the country. He had the money to buy a house if he wanted, and one long evening at Saxby's rooms the poet and his friends talked and planned a perfect home in the country. They allowed themselves to dream of the sort of place which in sober earnest does not exist on this planet. Saxby was pleased, and as ever, when an idea found his heart he was extremely enthusiastic and his mind fruitful of projects.

His first thought was of a home in England, so that when he died he might be buried in an English churchyard. He visited a delightful new house in a wood on the fringe of Stoke Common—decorations by Dupeigne, electric light by Howlett, complete in its own grounds, eminently desirable. What attracted him were the natural trees and bushes and wildness of the wood creeping up to the very door. One could have all the doors and windows open all day in summer. Its price was three thousand pounds, and it would obviously be necessary to have several servants to look after it for him. Saxby's mind was in labour for some

days. But at last with a sigh of relief he decided in the negative.

Then he was recommended to go and see a simply perfect cottage on the Sussex Downs. But he found it far from perfect.

He motored to West Hendred to see a seventeenth-century mansion, but when he saw its damp old walls he remarked simply, "This is not for me."

He saw five empty houses on the Surrey Hills in one day, each one of them advertised vaguely as *eligible.* But not one would do.

Then he was just too late to obtain a lovely house in an orchard near Maidstone. It had been bought the day before by a lawyer. "Perhaps it will not suit him," said Saxby to the owner.

"On the contrary," said the latter, "he said that it suited him down to the ground."

"Well, I suppose then it wouldn't have suited me after all," said Saxby humbly.

He scanned the advertisement columns of the *Times* and the estate agents' lists in *Country Life.* He entrusted himself to agents, called in Harrods,

made innumerable visits to country places with "Orders to View," but with no success.

"I have shed one illusion," said Saxby to a bishop to whom he had applied for knowledge of anything specially good in his diocese. "The houses which are for sale are not the beautiful houses. Of all the places I have been induced to visit half could be made into prisons with but little alteration."

"I am afraid you are hard to please," said the bishop.

"Yes, I suppose I am," said Saxby, and rubbed his hands cheerfully.

I really believe he had a certain pleasure in giving the verdict of "No" against a house which was to let. It filled him with happiness when after long and serious consideration he came to the conclusion that such and such a place was not for him.

People came to him and said, "We've found just the very thing for you," and the old poet smiled incredulously and yet hopefully, and was all agog to visit it. He would come to it, would admire the thousand-year-old yew tree mentioned in Domesday Book, and the fine beams and the chimney-

corner, the old oak-panelled walls, the "old-world" garden, the view of the old church, and yet he would mysteriously decide against it.

Or some one would say, "We've found an old farmhouse that has some very good points"; and he would reply, "I shouldn't take a cottage on points, you know, it's something about its 'altogether' that I am looking for, but still . . ."

Yes, an unpractical old fellow and yet so lovable, more lovable than ever in his grey hairs.

He visited castles and abbeys in Yorkshire and windmills in East Anglia, river palaces and bungalows on the Thames and the Severn, picturesquely and romantically situated residences galore, and did not tire. He went abroad again for a while and carried his quest with him, but somehow could not tolerate the idea of finding a home in Italy or Switzerland or Greece, or in any of those delightful lands where upon occasion our poets have loved to dwell, and he returned home and resumed his quest in the old country.

An expression of pleasure perhaps gives the clue both to his life as a whole and to this "cottage-hunting mania," as some called it. "You know,"

said he to a particular friend, "this quest of a suitable abode tickles my fancy immensely—my spiritual fancy, I mean. I love this going about from place to place seeking a perfectly suitable home, a place that I could with a good conscience buy and make *my very own*. And it is glorious that I can again and again say *No*. It is something like this that I have been doing all my life, something like this which has impelled me to wander—the seeking of a *milieu* that would fit, this trying to match the pattern of the soul which we know in ourselves cannot be matched in this world and this life. I should be mortified past belief and lie in deep dudgeon if one of these beautiful English houses were found to suit me and I could buy it and say, 'This is Saxby's home.' "

"You would soon leave it and go on, 'Once more on your adventure brave and new,' " said the friend.

Which was a true saying, and the old man smiled.

It was not long after this that on one of his long journeys he fell ill in the train and was carried out and died at a wayside village.

Several friends were called to his side, but they were too late. The one friend who was accompanying him on the journey read to him at his request a chapter of St. John's Gospel.

The friends, most of whom had tried to find the old poet a house, were deeply moved when they heard that Saxby had already passed away. A newspaper man said, "England has lost her greatest poet; we must look in the sky to-night for a new star." A very near friend, also a poet, said, "He has got out at last," and a clergyman who was present expressed a common thought, "Now he has found rest." I picked up the open Gospel and read—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions."

"He has given up the substance for the shadow," said I, looking at the calm and beautiful but empty face of the dead, "and we love him the more."

ALICE

Beauty must change, must die, but the beauty is not lost, for beauty which passes from her goes on. The face that you loved is loved for ever.

VIII

ALICE

She had a calm strong heart. Her spirit's habitation was secure; no part of it had felt a strain during fifty years of royal life. It had borne the storms and the silences; bending equably to the gales or slackening restfully to the calms, and now she felt herself upon the unruffled bosom of an infinite peace. In her heart she knew no storm could ever rage again, no tumultuous passion could ever fuse her being in the glow of joy or grief. And in the twilight hour it was to her as if there approached her the outstretched wings of a great grey bird alighting on the earth, the wings lengthening out to take in the East and the West, and it was as if the whole earth were clasped to the breast of a dove. She shut her eyes and felt herself drawn forward, forward into the greyness and the silence of the unknown, and of the place where she will not know. So it will be with her to the end.

. . . . . .

In a kingdom which is within this universe a sun shines so brightly that our sun cannot be seen, and the very moon there is so bright that it obscures our moon and stars and light. The eye of man looking at that broad day cannot arise any lens through which the soul can comprehend. So to man that day is night, and the things of that day unseen. The sun of that realm dips into this world unseen, and unseen in this world, it dips seen into its own. It is there that the other children of man are living.

. . . . . .

Upon a day years ago, Alice, for so she was then called, lay upon a new bed in a brightly furnished room in the early morning. Luxuriantly warm, with pleasant caressing sheets about her, she lay resting her head on the soft flesh of her arm. She looked out into the room. Last night had been a wild one. To her it had been the one great night of her life. For through hours she had mounted from pleasure to pleasure, until she dared not think for joy. She had lived in the fulness of her life, and her beauty had been one, both within and

without and in the eyes of those that beheld. For the night had begun in the pleasure of the unexpected, and the glow of new-met friends. And, as it were, she had in those earliest moments divined a highest orbit for her life. So she began in equanimity and lived equably through the minutes and the hours as towards a great goal. There were upon her lips words, a whispered secret, but whence she knew not.

"Only grant my soul may carry high through death its cup unspilled." She had conceived a thought, but knew not its name. From point to point her soul had risen, and her joy became more unthinkable, and throughout she had held herself as if for an end. In the wild rapture of the dance, in the languishment and passion of her song, she knew in her heart some great goal. And the man she loved had come to her and he was transfigured in her eyes. He also saw her in the fulness of her beauty. It appeared to her that in all the universe there was only herself and this man. Still she mounted, and more and more she glowed in beauty as her soul fused her being—and then as it were she forgot. She forgot the names of the stars

outside, and of the people about her, and of the gaiety and the light, and of the man she loved, and she forgot the parts of herself. . . .

The incomprehensible fulness of joy, the flash of whose fire blinded her sense, the intolerable perfection of her happiness, meant death—one death—and then life again, the life burst and relief. Dread and pain whispered in her heart. She felt abandoned through fire. . . .

Into sleep.

Now she had awakened; and in a strange uncomprehended calm she looked out from her bed at the blank door which was a little open. Some cords were hanging from a nail in the door, and in the twisting of these cords she felt the sense of an interrogation mark. The commonest objects in the room seemed charged with new meaning. She was in a room of mystery, in the web of a labyrinth, as in a chamber of the Pyramids. The kaleidoscope of life had turned a phase, and grouped the colours in figures with which she was unfamiliar. She could not read the writing on the wall. The twisting of the cords was a cypher in the perfect Sanskrit, that language which has

been written by God upon all visible things as an indication of the direction of His purpose.

She lay in her bed and stared around her as one might stare who in his sleep had been transported in the night into a strange department. An unnamed questioning was in her heart. Not only was her world created anew, but the centre of that world was new. There was new life, new meaning, deep at the very core of her being.

She felt as if she had tossed on a wild ocean, but had been lifted by some last wave right beyond the storm to some safe inland place. But that storm had been herself; she had left herself in that. Here she was, new becalmed, half lost, questioning. And she knew she could never be again what she had been.

. . . . . .

In the grey-blue of a perfect sky of that other world is seen a cloud. The soft bosom of an unseen body, as faint as a breath in colour, breasts the sky of that inner world, and the cloud takes form, and the physiognomy of passion. The deep, downy, rifted, grey-white cloud breathes into that unseen world and a woman's bosom heaves—heaves

high and trembles with the breasts flung wide—trembles to the breaking-point, dissolves and disappears.

And it cannot be known to man how another child has been born to him, how a spirit has detached itself from a woman in the wild fulness of her joy.

But in this realm the spirit exists; exhaled from the breast of a woman, and Alice lives onward there in a life where the joy of the new obscures the joy of the old, and our midday of joy is a dawn.

. . . . . .

One night twenty years later, Alice was again in the same room. In her heart was a dull questioning and a new-born hope. She looked about her with interest, as upon a new world. For again she had slept through darkness, and had awakened to unfamiliar light. By her bed, kneeling in sorrow, she had fallen asleep, and now, looking around her, she realised a change—a change that she construed as mercy and forgiveness. A new-born thankfulness was in her heart, and a joy of relief from pain.

The day had been one of sobbing: she had felt

it to be the very greatest and the hardest of her life. For years since the day of her great joy, her hopes had been dying. Less and less had she been joyful, more and more had she been full of grief. For months hope after hope had been disappearing; grief had been reinforcing grief, and day by day the last minute had been coming. She had prayed God, "Keep this for me; restore that to me; what is there left in life? Take not everything away from me!" But in her heart had been the foreknowledge of complete deprivation. The chances were going out of her life. The life that is in life was leaving it, and the colours were being withdrawn, threatening to leave behind only cold, monotonous grey—a twilight world.

This last day she had fought and struggled and fallen helpless in unnameable grief. For it was to-day that she had realised completely that the last joys in life were finally severed, and that the treasures she had had in husband and son were lost for ever. Restrainedly and in mastery of herself she had lived through the earlier hours till the temptation of despair overcame her. Kneeling upon the ground, she had thrown her head and arms upon

her old bed in perfect agony. There she had exhausted her thoughts and her hopes. The world with its sun and moon and stars moved away from her, like canvas scenery across a vast stage. She was left kneeling outside in the dark. Light had faded from the room, and from outside and from within, from time and from memory and from sense. She had forgotten . . . and slept.

Now she was awake and knew herself changed. All the passion had fled. A new light was in the room and in her memory and in her heart. In her eyes everything about her was grey and phantasmal. From the open window, through which the moon shone, veiled in clouds, was wafted the sense of an interrogation mark. Once again the kaleidoscope had turned a phase, and the colours were grouped in new figures. In the fireplace the embers glowed dully among the grey ash, and, as it were, mystic figures moved to and fro in strange rites there. Life was new. A world lay before her new veiled, or a world from which a veil had been withdrawn. Or a film had risen from her eyes, or a light curtain had rolled down over them. For the mercy of God, the woman Alice, as she

was to-day, knelt before a power unnamed in her soul in thankfulness. But she will never be again what she has been.

. . . . . .

And to the darkness of that inner world a spirit of grief has escaped, a spirit of grief with our midnight of grief as its twilight, and there lives a new child of man exhaled from a woman in her grief.

. . . . . .

In an untenanted house the twilight was reflected in the blank windows. All was still, empty, dead. There lay in one room the body of a woman. As an old inland shore, from which the whole sea had long departed, the lifeless body lay. Emptied of its last still life by the inbreathing twilight of another world, there was nothing here remaining that any one would call alive. The woman who was called Alice had made the course of the whole of that space which lies between the two darknesses.

. . . . . .

In other realms, the unlost life of Man passes onward to the undivined.

MATHILDE

The face which the artist sees before the rhapsody of creating.

IX

MATHILDE

The gentleness of pure pearls pendent on invisible ears. And then celestial eyes looking from an invisible face. A heart beating. Unseen hands feeling through the air and unseen feet barely touching the earth. It is the presence of Mathilde. She is all loveliness and spiritual ardour, and a mysterious, Ariel-like personality. She goes to meet Henri her lover, tigerish Henri, passionate, daring, aspiring artist and man, man and animal that he is.

The weather is hot and the air leaves one languid. Humid and acrid currents fan the nerves, begetting restlessness and desire, and earth as it were envies the spirits who move over her and sucks them to herself. But celestial and peerless Mathilde is immune from the power of the earth, and barely touching it she goes forward to

the tryst, Mathilde with her dark eyebrows and flashing eyes.

She is not restless in soul, but thinks imperiously of her lover and of the idea to which he has consecrated his life, of the lost cathedral he will rebuild, of the need to save money, to save interest, to save love to be enabled to build an absolute replica of the great but lost cathedral.

It glimmers over their heads, the great white-walled citadel and temple of God, with its mighty supports clasping it about and its glory of pinnacle and tower, its spires and crosses and its immensity of space and height of praise. They hear its music even before it has come to be.

But Henri comes, dark and swarthy Henri with eyes and brain aflame, with his long arms and beautiful hands, strong body and beautiful head, Henri, artist, maker and doer, with head in the blue sky and feet firm upon the earth.

And the loveliness of Mathilde is the loveliness of the cathedral, inspiring, enchanting, causing him to fall on his knees.

So the invisible and lovely one stands above him, and he, all too visible, kneels at her feet.

He adores, she inspires. He dreams, she is his dream. He dreams more, she is more than his dream. He aspires, she receives him into her invisible being. He for a moment almost ceases to exist, is hers entirely and for ever.

And then, and then, because it is only almost, because there was a shred of identity left in separateness behind, the change began, the mood altered and the spell unbound, and a new spell arose, this time from the earth.

Earth rose through the artist to pull Psyche down; earth plunged its sense into Henri and prompted her desire, and he rose from his knees and stood equal with Mathilde.

His hands grew hot, and his eyes which had blazed with light blazed with heat. He desired to see and to feel and to know. He put his arms about her and made her to have a body. Lips found her cheeks and her eyes and her lips. Hands gave her shoulders, and side and waist, kindred hands, kindred knees, and kindred feet. He brought her down to earth and forgot her whom he worshipped, forgot cathedral and dream, whilst she swooned in the spell.

Then Mathilde returned heavily the way she came, not thinking, still half-entranced by the spell of the earth. But a shame began to grow on her and she looked sadly on her opaque white hands which had lately been translucent. She unbent her lips whose shape her lover had seemingly been trying to change. She came to her chamber and knew her body moist and heavy after the embrace, knew herself tired, knew that the day had been hot. And she bathed and perfumed herself, put on new linen, read a beautiful poem. But still she was not as before. Her pearls hang from most dainty but visible ears. Her dark eyes, now filmed, are set in the loveliness of a pale human face. Her neck rises poised between her shoulders. She has grace and bearing and womanhood. She is not as before.

But then night comes and she sleeps, and in her sleep casts off the spell of earth. Next day once more she is as before. Lovely invisible Mathilde.

And then the tryst once more.

And the spell once more.

And evening once more.

And sleep once more,

And once more the gentleness of soft pearls pendent on invisible ears.

And with Henri the cathedral dream is the celestial loveliness of her face.

SERAPION THE SINDONITE

Wonderful Serapion, the antique hermit, did not desire to be thought a man; he was content to be a limb. For the service of Christ he sold himself to be a slave, and he said reproachfully to the crowd that was ready to spit on a slave, "I am yours, I am not mine." In spitting on him they were spitting on a limb of themselves, spitting in humanity's face and the face of the Creator, though they did not know. Serapion found Christ in this way, that he made himself one with Him, a part of Him.

X

SERAPION THE SINDONITE

His idea of service was to sell himself to be a slave so that he might win his master or mistress to Christ. He was called the Sindonite because he wore but a swathing of linen, and that was his only garment, being clothed otherwise sufficiently in the love of God. His body he called his cell in which his soul was always kneeling.

Serapion was an Egyptian, that is a Copt, not an Arab, and he lived in that era of faith when the deserts of Nitria and Scete and the Sahara were more populated by hermits and holy men than the great cities of Alexandria or Jerusalem. In his day thousands of votive men and women had the impulse to go out from the striving and secular cities of the empire of Rome and endeavour to become part here and now of the Kingdom of God. And among them came the young Copt Serapion with the glory of Christ in his eyes, full of grace

and truth, to live in the desert with God, communing with the Word of the Scriptures. He was clothed in one piece of linen and in his own spiritual radiance, and he knelt humbly before God, and humbly and yet joyfully read the Book of Books.

There were about him in the desert hermits whose denial of the world expressed itself in various ways; some who had scooped holes in the sand, some living in the tombs and ruins of old Egypt; others in monastery buildings, others again without any shelter whatsoever; some humbly pious, some fanatical and hysterical, some loving and gentle, some bitter and severe. There were undoubtedly both evil and ambitious men as well as humble and holy men of God, and if the many did cause the desert to blossom with spiritual blossoms, there were those also whose presence was searing and mortifying even to miraculous flowers.

On the right and on the left were disputatious hermits, destined to be depicted with halos after their death, yet often dwelling in the darkness of pride and ambition in their lives. They averred they had come to save their own souls, knew they had saved them by their act of renunciation, and

now only sought a greater and greater glory in God's eyes by out-doing one another in spiritual feats, in singing and praying against one another and mortifying the flesh.

They attracted great crowds of pilgrims and religious sightseers, but Serapion none knew, neither did he know them, and he dwelt in a sweet morning solitude wherein nothing was evil and all was innocent and full of grace. Yet there was care in the desert for him, he was troubled in heart at the recollection of the unhappy world he had left behind, but as like goes to like, so the holy and the true mysteriously learned of him and knew of him. And there were wiser than he to whom he could submit for advice. They for their part knew that Serapion was near to God and directly in touch with his Lord.

So when the message came to Serapion to forsake the desert they did not say him nay. From the living Gospel he learned that God would love him to go back to the world which in many ways was more dead and barren than the desert itself, go back to the world and be servant of all, for the Word's sake.

God thus chose him and marked him out among his fellow-hermits, and he left the wise and the holy, left also the emulous, and went back to the world, whence he had come, to be servant of all.

He went up to Alexandria and sailed on the sea to Greece, of which he had heard as being in as great need of spiritual life as in St. Paul's day. He came to the gay city of Corinth, and his heart being first touched by a showman and his wife, living in sordid ignorance of Christ, he went to them and sold himself to be their slave. The twenty pieces of silver which he received in exchange for his freedom he put away in a crevice in a rock. For in common with other hermits he did not acknowledge that money had power and he knew that his payments and receipts must be rather in God's currency, the coinage of the Kingdom of Heaven. The home of the showman was a centre of sin, and much happened there that Serapion did not understand. But he fulfilled every duty laid upon him, even the most menial and least worthy that a man should do; and whenever anything went wrong in the house Serapion took the fault upon himself and never complained. He

took upon himself all manner of fault that the showman and the showman's wife knew to be their own. They for their part learned greatly to respect their tireless servant but did not understand his humility, till one day Serapion explained.

A fire had broken out in a room in the house of the showman, brought about one night after a successful performance through the incaution of frivolous visitors.

Said Serapion, "I pray God's love and care for you, and for me that I may be vigilant. But I did not pray fervently enough, therefore the fire came to you. Alas, I am weak and sinful."

Such explanation won the admiration and love of these two Greeks and made them think of God and Christ. They became aware of the great blessing they had in their wonderful slave. For indeed even in a material way Serapion seemed to have brought fortune. And as they watched him they were won by his bright spiritual personality and resolved one day to become Christian and give up their meaningless Greek gods.

Then they said to Serapion, "Thou hast redeemed us. Let us, we pray, redeem thee." And

they brought to him his token of slavery and gave it him back. Then, holding hands together, as freemen and equals they knelt and prayed aloud. Serapion led them in the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, and called for God's blessing. That done, he hastened and fetched the money that had been paid him for himself, the twenty pieces of silver, and gave them back to his master and mistress, though they besought him with tears that he would keep it still for their sake. But Serapion explained that he had renounced the world and, belonging now to God's Kingdom, could not use money which was currency of Cæsar. So, much marvelling, though inwardly at peace, the new-born Christians watched their slave Serapion go on his way, clothed as he was so meagrely in his bit of linen, but with the light of God around him.

Serapion's heart was next touched by a rich man to whom for the same blessed cause he sold himself, and he did so well that in two years the whole household was brought to the faith. Liberating him, his master gave him a coat and a cloak and the Gospel, and Serapion, well-clad, journeyed northward in the winter. But he soon gave away

coat and cloak to the cold and ragged whom he met on the way, and he journeyed on as he had done before, the Sindonite, but with the holy Gospel in his hands.

In Athens Serapion starved for want of bread, and there a Stoic who had observed his pitiful state endeavoured to put a Christian to the test. After Serapion had been three days without food the Stoic came to him and offered to buy the Gospel from him for money to buy bread. Serapion refused, and the fourth and the fifth day the Stoic repeated his attempt, but the Coptic hermit bowed humbly, repeating ever, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This so moved the Stoic that life began to stir in the dry heart of the philosopher, and having from his heart and out of his love given the hermit bread, he knelt beside him and read from the Book and was saved.

By these and many like divine adventures Serapion fulfilled his spiritual mission in Greece, and in course of time was moved to go to Rome. And wherever he went he was upborne by the Spirit, and whatever he wished, though fellow-

man said it was impossible, yet for him through grace it became possible. Then he sailed on the sea and was cared for by the ship's company though he never had a farthing to pay his passage. And he was fed though he had no money to buy food. Indeed when it was proposed by the captain that the stowaway hermit be put down at the nearest port the superstitious sailors would not hear of it. But indeed Serapion earned his passage on that ship, for through his serviceableness he did as much menial and necessary work as three extra sailors would have done.

In Rome he served two long periods of slavery in which he was transferred to others and constantly mingled and intermingled with suffering souls in the great and wicked world. He wore humanity's yoke and said to the crowd that sometimes spat upon a slave, "I am yours, I am not mine; I am flesh of your flesh, spirit of your spirit; poor Serapion is not a man, he is happy to be a limb."

And scholars and critics sat at high windows and looked over the wicked city and despaired, not knowing of the leaven working in it, ever humbly

and untiringly working, not knowing that spirit of humanity's spirit was Serapion, the beautiful spiritual being, wilfully selling itself to the slavery of the flesh for the greatest of spiritual ends.

So passed the life of Serapion the Sindonite. But when old age came upon him the Spirit prompted once more: "Go now to Egypt again; leave Rome in which thou hast laboured for a while and seek the spiritual peace of Egypt." And he returned to his desert and his humble praying place on the left and on the right of which the disputatious hermits still wrangled for glory. In course of time they died and so did he. But it is said that greater miracles were wrought where his body lay than at the mighty ecclesiastical shrines near-by.

SIMON ON THE PILLAR

"And I if I be lifted up . . . will draw all men unto me." Heroic Simon made his Imitatio Christi, affirming by his symbolic posture that man was above the earth. Christ raised the ideal level of humanity, giving witness to the Divine in man. All look towards Christ on the Cross, for from its four corners He raises us up to Himself and supports us. All looked toward Simon who made his life a candle before the ideal.

XI

SIMON ON THE PILLAR

Simon was a wonder of the world. In him all hermits gained fame, and humanity itself was raised. By God's grace he was chosen to be a candle to men and tribes and nations. He was a living and continuing miracle, a new marvel of young Christianity, a fixed and steady star in the East.

Simon's service was an affirmation of the Divine in man. The known world of men in those days was sunk in vice and sensual luxury. Men by their ordinary lives proclaimed themselves to be little better than animals. The slaves were like jaded horses and mules, the free townsmen were like goats or monkeys, the barbarians like tigers, the sorcerers like serpents, the wise men like elephants. But Simon and many brothers of the spirit proclaimed the great counter-cry of Christianity—Ye are parts of God, members of Christ,

O ye men, not beasts of the forest and the field. And the beautiful Simon with the light of God in his eyes, the living word on his lips, stood on his pillar in Syria like God's candle in the East.

He was moved as a boy in the same way as Serapion, and yearned to deny the flesh and the world everlastingly in his body and his life. He was born in Cilicia, in the village of Cis, in the year 388, of Christian parents, and was baptized, and became with years a gentle shepherd boy who said his prayers in the field. And he used to collect sweet gum and resin and burn it so he might see the smoke go up to God, the way his thoughts yearned also from his burning heart. He found communion with God, and God in turn gave him dreams and visions, and prompted his young heart. Simon was prompted and then God confirmed.

Whilst his companions of the field ate and drank and made merry, the young Simon fasted and expected visions. Whilst they were together he went apart, and his eyes were strained to see something they did not see, his ears were set to catch a note of heavenly music which they did not sing. He went

up into the mountains and into the chapels and prayed, and whilst all others in Cis slept he knelt in the church at midnight and was told silently of things to be.

Anon Simon's father died and half of a rich estate became his. But he called in all the poor far and near and made a feast for them, and divided among them all his corn and his gold, and having done so took up the Cross to follow the Master. He set off upon the road that led to Antioch and beyond—his life-road of service. And on the way he came to the monastery of Teleda, where a kinsman had lived thirty-five years in a cell. The abbot took Simon in though he was but fifteen, and thus so young he began to carry out the hard rule by which the monks and anchorites denied this life, this world, in the name of *that* life, *that* world. Simon received Holy Communion daily, and, except on Sundays, received no other food, so it may be said he was supported even physically by the Living Bread which came down from heaven.

And from his body there fell away that coarser flesh and substance which is made by the ordinary

bread on which the animal in us is nourished. And new cells, formed to be the web of his soul, were given him from the living body and blood of our Lord.

So much did he change and stand out in contrast that the other monks in the monastery could not but notice him, and there were some who were consumed with jealousy—good men in themselves, but not possessed of the fitness of Simon. The angry brothers did not see how Simon glorified the brotherhood and themselves by his fairness and spiritual beauty. They would have attracted God's notice to themselves, and were angry as Cain was at Abel's more acceptable sacrifice. They went unto Heliodorus, their abbot, and clamoured against Simon, and had they been men of the Old Testament rather than of the New, they had certainly slain their brother. But the Christ that died to make us one restrained them thus far. Nevertheless Simon was forced to leave Teleda, and the good man Heliodorus was forced to part with the pearl of great price.

And Simon at twenty-four years came to the monastery of Telnesche near Antioch, and was joy-

fully received beyond its walls. There he became a complete recluse for the first period of Lent; he knelt in a small cell with a Cross and a book and a basket of bread and a pitcher of water, and the cell was walled up till Easter morn, when the brothers broke down the wall anxiously and excitedly, fearing he might have died. And they found the fair young man like the shining One in the sepulchre greeting them with the knowledge that Christ had risen indeed. Simon received Communion then, and the loaves and the water which had been put in the cell were found to have been untouched.

Then they built for their anchorite a mandra, a circle of desert sand with a wall built around it. And he was obscured from his fellow-men, but exposed to wind and weather from above, and heat and cold. But he knelt and prayed, and those who passed by the wall knew that though nought was seen, a holy man continually watched within.

The thought had come to Simon when he was walled up in the monastery wall: I am just one brick of the Church, a living brick. So must we all be at last, living bricks in the walls of the heav-

enly Jerusalem. And when he was promoted from the closed cell to the mandra he felt he was one stage nearer the great true life of faith when no walls whatever would be needed.

And indeed if saints can walk in this world in heavenly bodies, Simon was coming to that guise. All earthly and animal dross had departed from him. He approached the pure gold of which Jerusalem's streets are paved. His empyreal substance was manifest.

"Thou art part of the City," a voice whispered to Simon, "thou art part of Sophia and of the Bride. Thou art humanity's candle, thou art part of the light of men."

Round about the walls of the mandra were many seekers and pilgrims, for the spiritual fame of Simon was already great in Syria. And as Simon thought and knew he was part of the City of God of which all must in time become living bricks each in his place, he was moved to manifest himself to the throngs without, and he arose on to a pillar which was in the centre of the mandra till he was just seen. Then he built the pillar higher and grew upon it higher and higher, built it still more

high with help, and as he rose and knelt upon it it grew higher still. And the city which was set on the hill could not be hid, neither could the light mounted on the candlestick of Simon's high column.

On a column 90 feet high and 3 feet in breadth he lived thirty years and prayed and preached and prophesied, and never came down, neither in storm nor in cold, night nor day. At first it seemed so narrow a platform he was constantly in danger of falling, but in course of time he got as used to it as a landowner might become to a large estate or a traveller to the world, and he could have halved the standing-ground and still felt free. And he could sleep as he stood. He could bow from his head to his feet without bending his knees, and a disciple once counted one thousand two hundred and forty-four adorations of this kind and then grew tired of counting, though marvellous Simon did not grow tired.

The example and the figure of the hermit on the column moved humanity greatly, and many were the men and women who turned from the world and sought to affirm the Spirit and the Kingdom in mon-

astery cell and desert cave. The fame of Simon spread to new countries and climes, and the white pillar on which he stood seemed to continue to rise, to rise and to rise like the pale morning light, till the face of the beautiful hermit looked over the dark sea, over snowy mountain ranges, over vast plains, and rivers and towns and cities. And at one moment all humanity looked to him and up to him.

And throngs of people of all nationalities came to the mandra walls and learned from the lips of the great living statue the new words of Christ, and they knew that the time was changed and could never be again what it had been. The superstitions and idolatries and despairs and ignorances of the night trembled and shook as morning breezes and light beams came over them.

A certain Greek came to Simon and called up to him, "O marvellous Angel, thou art not a man, thou art a God who hast come down to us from heaven and hast alighted on this pillar."

"Ah, no," cried Simon, "I am but one of you, a man. I have not come down, I have risen up to this height."

The Greek would have written on the column "Ecce Deus," but of Simon as of Christ it might most fitly be said, "Ecce Homo—Behold the Man."

Before Simon's day and after men were proud of the fiercenesses or sagacity of the animal in themselves. But Simon in himself raised the ideal level of humanity, and many a man and woman looking to him saw themselves as they wished they were—that is, as they really were.

There are an infinite number of stories and legends of the pilgrim men and women and whole tribes of the east and the south that came to Simon to see, hear, or be blessed. One of the most beautiful is that shortly before the holy man's death Christ Himself alighted on the pillar and the saint went up to heaven.

Simon fell into the *coma* of death and for three days neither spoke nor moved nor gave token of life. His disciple Antony watched at his side, and on the third day was aware of sweet odours rising from the body and a procession of light as it were a spirit moving. The mandra down below was plunged in gloom and the sound of the wailing of the pilgrims floated upward. For Simon's silence

was so unwonted. So greatly the people yearned to hear the voice of the hermit again that life was fain to return. A gracious figure stood erect once more on the column, bowed to east and to west, to north and to south, and then gave blessing, "O bless ye my children, bless ye, my poor children." And humanity in the vague morning light heard him, and as the figure melted backward away from them again, all rocked together in the music of a psalm.

So Simon died, and we remember and acknowledge that he rose on his pillar that we might have light, even as Christ was lifted up that we might have life. Christian knights and warriors rode over Europe compelling Christianity on tribes and nations, but behind them was the light of Simon and Serapion and many another holy and heroic brother of the East.

The light which they announced by their lives was the light of the divine in man, it was the tidings of a higher destiny for us all—that we should not perish like the beasts of the field, but be one with God and in God through love. Love is the

clue to our destiny. And as Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved

Thy power that exists with and for it, of being beloved!
He who did most shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

THE END

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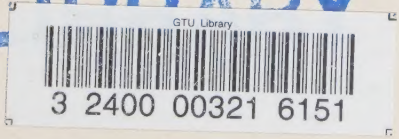
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